

Policy

Policy / Procedure / Guideline:	Social Media Policy
Date of adoption:	March 2024
Lead staff member:	Sinead Travis
Review date:	March 2026

Summary of values

Every child has the right to access a world-class education. We exist to empower, enable and inspire children to achieve their every potential through exceptional teaching, innovative approaches to learning, and a community-oriented approach to meeting learners' needs.

This policy and its effectiveness is monitored on a termly basis by the Online Safety Group; in light of any significant new developments in the use of digital technologies, new threats to online safety or incidents that have taken place, this policy may be reviewed at any time.

This policy will undergo a full review every three years.

Social Media Policy

Casterton Primary Academy recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff are actively encouraged to use social media as part of their ongoing CPD. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the academy and its staff.

All schools, academies and local authorities have a duty of care to provide a safe learning environment for pupils and staff. Schools/academies and local authorities could be held responsible, indirectly for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. Expectations for teachers' professional conduct are set out in 'Teachers Standards 2012'. Staff members who harass, cyberbully, discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or disability or who defame a third party may render Casterton Primary Academy or Pendle Education Trust liable to the injured party. Reasonable steps to prevent predictable harm must be in place.

Scope

This policy:

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

The school respects privacy and understands that staff may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the academy's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the academy (or by extension Pendle Education Trust) or impacts on the academy, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

- **SLT**
 - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
 - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy.
 - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
 - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
 - Approve professional social media account creation
- **Administrator / Moderator**
 - Create the account following SLT approval.
 - Store account details, including passwords securely.
 - Be in receipt of the two-factor authentication codes to allow access on new devices.
 - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account.
 - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring).
- **Staff**
 - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies.
 - Attending appropriate training.
 - Regularly monitor, update and manage content they have posted via academy accounts.
 - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the academy.

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department Twitter account, or a “Friends of the school” Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the SLT which covers the following points:

- The aim of the account.
- The intended audience.
- How the account will be promoted.
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named).
- Will the account be open or private/closed.

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring

Academy accounts are monitored regularly and frequently. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts are responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend or during school holidays) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Parents are informed that social media is not the preferred method of contact with school and are directed to the enquiries email address and school office contact number. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on an academy social media account.

Behaviour

The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.

Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.

Unacceptable conduct using social media, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.

The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.

The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.

Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media will be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly

Use of images

Academy use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes must be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload pupil pictures online other than via academy-owned social media accounts
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Pupils should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any academy list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture, which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use

Staff

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications, which do not refer to or impact upon the school, are outside the scope of this policy.

Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken

The academy permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites on personal devices in school, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy.

Pupils

Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or former pupils of the school (under the age of 18) on any personal social media network account.

The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media when they are old enough to use it.

Monitoring posts about the school

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school and respond to these appropriately.

Parental Involvement

If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.

The school promotes safe and positive parent/carer use of social media.

Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

Pupil Participation

The school's online safety curriculum progression enables the pupils to be safe and responsible users of social media when they are old enough to do so.

Safeguarding

All adults who come into contact with pupils and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

For specific details, refer to the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and *Online Safety Policy*.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the role of the post holder with responsibility for this policy to monitor its effectiveness and suitability. Any proposed changes need to be presented to the school's leadership team before wider appropriate consultation is undertaken directed by the Academy Principal.

Appendices

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts.
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy.
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint.
- Keep your personal information private.
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to.
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post.
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem.
- Don't use social media to air professional grievances.

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school.
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views.
- Make it clear who is posting content.
- Use an appropriate and professional tone.
- Be respectful to all parties.
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author.
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner.
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion.
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process.
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible.

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute.
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material.
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation.
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content.
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies or guidelines:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Technical Security Policy
- Electronic Devices – Searching and Deletion Policy
- Cloud Storage Risk Assessment
- GDPR Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2020