



## **Social Media Policy**

Tees Valley Education Trust

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## **1 STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Tees Valley Education understands that social media is a growing part of life outside our academies. We have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet in our academies, and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online within the wider community.

As a Trust we are committed to:

- encouraging the responsible use of social media in support of the academy's mission, values and objectives
- using appropriate social media to promote the work of Tees Valley Education and its academies
- protecting our pupils from the dangers of social media
- preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of each academy and the Trust through irresponsible use of social media
- protecting our staff from cyber bullying and potentially career damaging behaviour
- increasing and updating all stake holders' e-safety knowledge on a regular basis.

## **2 DEFINITIONS**

Tees Valley Education defines "social media" as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including but not limited to:

Blogs.

Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com.

Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook.

Media sharing services, such as Marvellous Me and YouTube.

'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter.

The Trust defines "cyber bullying" as any use of social media or communication technology to bully an individual or group.

## **3 KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Trust Board delegates the responsibility for the implementation of the Social Media Policy and procedures to Head Teachers of its academies.

The Trust Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Social Media Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Individual Academies and Trust staff have responsibility for correctly handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust Complaints Policy.

All staff members within each academy are responsible for ensuring the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and procedures.

All staff in each academy, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Social Media Policy, as well as ensuring all pupils do so. They are responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom and wider academy community.

Whilst academy staff will support where possible, parents and carers are expected to take responsibility for the social media habits of their child/children at home.

Parents and carers are expected to promote safe social media behaviour.

#### **4 TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Tees Valley Education recognises that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyber bullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, all stake holders will receive appropriate social media training, as organised and facilitated by each individual academy.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Social Media Policy as part of the annual safeguarding training plan, or their academy induction as appropriate.

As well as Social Media training within safeguarding, Trust staff will also receive appropriate social media training with regard to the academies approaches to promoting the academy and wider Trust.

#### **5 SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

##### **5.1 Trust/Curriculum**

Trust / Academy social media passwords are kept by delegated Senior Leaders within the establishment. These key staff are responsible for ensuring they are kept secure.

Whilst these may be delegated roles within each academy, the Head Teacher is ultimately responsible for the academy's social media accounts.

Social media should only be used during lesson time if part of a planned curriculum activity. Any use of personal social media is strictly prohibited.

If inappropriate content is accessed online, an inappropriate website content report form should be completed and passed on to the designated senior leader in each academy (see appendix 2)

The use of mobile phone technology is strictly prohibited as part of curriculum teaching. Further details of use of phones is outlined in our Mobile Phone Policy and individual academy handbooks.

##### **5.2 Staff**

Whilst it is not encouraged during the working day, Teachers may use social media on their personal technology devices during their break times. These devices may only be used in designated areas as agreed in each academy.

Members of staff should not use personal social media in front of pupils. Also see mobile phone policy.

Members of staff **must not** "friend" or otherwise contact pupils or parents/carers through social media.

If pupils or parents/carers attempt to "friend" or otherwise contact members of staff through social media, they should be reported to the Head Teacher.

Members of staff should avoid identifying themselves as an employee of Tees Valley Education on social media.

Members of staff **must not** post content on personal social media with regard to the Trust, their academy or any of its staff or pupils.

Where teachers or members of staff use social media in a personal capacity, any views posted should be personal.

Staff members **must** report to their Head Teacher any content they view on social media which brings negative representation to the Trust or Individual Academy.

Teachers or members of staff **must not** post any information which could identify a pupil, class or the academy.

Members of staff should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal.

Members of staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings Tees Valley Education into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.

Members of staff should regularly check their online presence for negative content via search engines.

Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the academy community, via social media, by teachers and members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

Members of staff should not leave a computer or other device logged on when away from their desk, or save passwords (refer to Trusts Password Security Policy).

Staff members should use their academy email address for academy business and personal email address for their private correspondence; the two should not be mixed.

### **5.3 Pupils and Parents/Carers**

Pupils may not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity overseen by a member of staff.

Breaches of this policy by pupils will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution, or exclusion.

Pupils and parents/carers **must not** attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact members of staff through social media. If attempts to contact members of staff through social media are made, they should be reported to the Head Teacher.

If members of staff attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact pupils or parents/carers through social media, they should be reported to the Head Teacher.

Pupils and parents/carers should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Pupils and parents/carers **must not** post content online which is damaging to the academy or any of its staff or pupils.

Pupils within Tees Valley Education are reminded that they **must not** sign up to social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil's age.

If inappropriate content is accessed online on academy premises, it **must** be reported to a teacher.

#### **5.4 Blocked Content**

The following social media websites are blocked by the network's firewalls:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

Many other sites are blocked in order to ensure the safety of all stakeholders. This is managed and regularly updated by One IT (Trusts IT provider).

Attempts to circumvent the network's firewalls will result in a ban from using academy computing equipment, other than with close supervision.

Inappropriate content which is accessed on the academy computers should be reported to the Head Teacher so that the site can be blocked.

Requests may be made to access erroneously blocked content by submitting a "blocked content access" form (appendix 1) to the Head Teacher who will make the final decision on whether access to the site may be granted.

### **6 CYBER BULLYING**

Within Tees Valley Education cyber bullying of any stakeholder is taken very seriously.

Incidents of cyber bullying will be dealt with and reported in line with the Anti-Bullying and safeguarding Policy.

Staff members should never respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Incidents should instead be reported as inappropriate, and support sought from their line manager or senior staff member.

Evidence from the incident should be saved, including screen prints of messages or web pages, and the time and date of the incident.

Where the perpetrator is a current pupil or colleague, most cases can be dealt with through the academy's own disciplinary procedures.

Where the perpetrator is an adult, in nearly all cases, a senior staff member should invite the victim to a meeting to address their concerns. Where appropriate, the perpetrator will be asked to remove the offensive content.

If the perpetrator refuses to comply, the incident and content will be reported to the CEO in order to decide upon next points of action. This may include contacting the individuals by formal letter or contacting the

internet service provider in question through their reporting mechanisms, if the offensive content breaches their terms and conditions.

If the material is threatening, abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitutes a hate crime, the police will be contacted.

As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of computing and PSHE.

Be **SMART** online

We encourage pupils to take a **SMART** approach to social media behaviour:

**Safe** – Do not give out personal information, or post photos of yourself to people you talk to online. Follow age restriction rules.

**Meeting** – Do not meet somebody you have only met online. We encourage parents/carers to speak regularly to their children about who they are talking to online.

**Accepting** – We advise that pupils only open emails and other forms of communication from people they already know.

**Reliable** – We teach pupils about the dangers of believing everything they see online.

**Tell** – We encourage pupils to tell a teacher, parent or carer if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

