



Social Media Policy

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Scope	3
3. Objectives and Targets	3
4. The Use of Social Media within the Academy	3
5. Use of Social Media Outside of Academy	4
6. General Considerations	4
7. Misuse of Social Media	5
8. Misconduct and Disciplinary Action	5
9. Monitoring and Reviewing	6
Appendix	
Guidance on Responding to Misuse Incidents	7

1. Introduction

For the purposes of this policy, social media refers to web based social networks, internet forums and blogs. Given the rapid expansion of social media, it is impossible to list all possible types of media as they are constantly evolving and multiplying.

Academy staff must assume that all online activity is covered by this policy and must follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use at work. They must also consider their teaching position when using social media in their personal situation.

While acknowledging the benefits of social media and the internet it is also important to recognise that risk to the safety and well-being of users is ever-changing and that the misuse/abuse of these facilities can range from inappropriate to criminal; and King's Cross Academy has this policy in place to deal with any misuse of social media.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to teachers, support staff, governors, volunteers and all who work on the Academy site.

3. Objectives and Targets

This policy takes account of all the appropriate legislation and sets out to:

- Assist those who work with pupils to work safely and responsibly, to monitor their own standards of behaviour and to prevent the abuse of their position of trust with pupils.
- Offer guidance on utilising social media for educational, personal and recreational use.
- Advise that, in the event of unsafe and/or unacceptable behaviour arising from the inappropriate use of social media, disciplinary or legal action (including gross misconduct leading to dismissal) will be taken if necessary in order to support safer working practices and minimise the risk of malicious allegations against staff colleagues and others who have contact with pupils at the Academy.

4. The Use of Social Media within the Academy

Academy staff are not permitted to access social media websites from the Academy's computers or other Academy devices at any time, unless authorised to do so by a member of the Academy leadership team.

However, staff may use their own electronic devices to access social media websites while they are in the Academy, outside of teaching or PPA sessions. Excessive use of social media, which could be considered to interfere with Academy productivity and providing an education service, and could therefore be considered as a misconduct matter, and subject to the Academy's disciplinary policy and procedure.

Staff must assume that any content they write (regardless of their privacy settings) could become public. Therefore, they must ensure that any content they produce is professional, maintaining a clear distinction between their personal and professional Academy lives.

Any use of social media made in a professional capacity must not:

- bring the Academy into disrepute;
- breach confidentiality;
- breach copyrights of any kind;
- bully, harass or be discriminatory in any way;
- be defamatory or derogatory.

5. Use of Social Media Outside of the Academy

The Academy appreciates that staff may make use of social media in a personal capacity. However, staff must be aware that if they are recognised from their user profile as being associated with the Academy, opinions they express could be considered to reflect the Academy's opinions and so could damage the reputation of the Academy. For this reason, they must avoid mentioning the Academy inappropriately by name, or any member of staff by name or position or any details relating to a pupil of the Academy. Opinions offered must not bring the Academy into disrepute, breach confidentiality or copyright, or bully, harass or discriminate in any way.

6. General Considerations

When using social media whether at work or outside of work staff and others within Academy must:

- Never share work log-in details or passwords
- Keep personal phone numbers private
- Never give personal email addresses or other personal data to pupils or parents (except where they are existing personal friends) or any other party.
- not have any pupils or any ex-pupils under the age of 18 as friends on their social networking sites
- Not to have any online friendships with any young people under the age of 18, unless they are family members or close family friends.
- Take personal responsibility for what they communicate in social media and bear in mind that what is published might be read by other staff, Governors, pupils, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time.
- Ensure that their on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by us and must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct which may be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of the Academy, such comments are inappropriate.
- Disclose any information confidential to the Academy to third parties
- Publish material that is illegal
- Restrict access to certain groups of people on their social media sites and pages.
- Link to your own blog or other personal web pages to the Academy website

Those working with children have a legal duty of care and are therefore, expected to adopt the highest standards of behaviour to retain the confidence and respect of governors, colleagues and pupils both within and outside of Academy. They must maintain appropriate boundaries and manage personal information effectively so that it cannot be misused by third parties e.g. for 'cyber-bullying' or identity theft.

Staff must also carefully consider contact with a pupil's family members because this may give rise to concerns over objectivity and/or impartiality.

Staff must send communications professionally: all messages are open to review and monitoring.

Staff must keep any communications with pupils transparent and professional and must only use the Academy's systems for communications. Governors must be mindful of this as well and act similarly in the course of their duties.

If there is any doubt or uncertainty about whether communication between a pupil/ parent and member of staff is acceptable and appropriate a member of the Academy's leadership team must be informed; so that they can decide how to deal with the situation. All staff are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media.

Often materials published will be accessible by the public and will remain accessible for a long time. Before joining the Academy, new employees must check any information they have posted on social media sites and remove any post(s) that could embarrassment or offence.

7. Misuse of Social Media

While acknowledging the undoubted benefits of social media and the internet; it is also important to recognise that there is a risk to the safety and well-being of users. This is ever-changing and evolving and that the misuse/abuse of these facilities can range from inappropriate to criminal. Misuse of social media can be summarised as follows:

Contact

- Commercial (tracking, harvesting personal information).
- Aggressive (being bullied, harassed or stalked).
- Sexual (meeting strangers, being groomed).
- Values (self-harm, unwelcome persuasions).

Conduct

- Commercial (illegal downloading, hacking, gambling, financial scams).
- Aggressive (bullying or harassing another).
- Sexual (creating and uploading inappropriate material).
- Values (providing misleading information or advice).

Content

- Commercial (advertises, spam, sponsorship, personal information).
- Aggressive (violent/hateful content).
- Sexual (pornographic or unwelcome sexual content).
- Values (bias, any protected characteristic defined under the Equality Act 2010, misleading info or advice).

8. Misconduct and Disciplinary Action

Any alleged breach of conduct under this policy may lead to disciplinary action under the Academy's disciplinary policy and procedure. Any serious breaches of this policy which are proven, such as incidents of bullying or of social media activity causing reputational or material damage to the Academy, may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to the staff member's dismissal.

In addition all Academy staff, governors and volunteers must be aware of what is considered to be 'criminal', constituting an illegal act, when using social media or the internet and electronic communication in general. For example buying or selling stolen goods, cypher bullying, inciting of religious hatred and acts of terrorism, the grooming and harassment of a child or young person. These examples are not exhaustive, and you are act caution and on advice if you are unsure.

There may be other actions in which might result in civil offences being committed and being pursued by other parties e.g. downloading of multimedia which infringes copyright.

Teachers must be mindful that their standards of conduct have to meet the requirements imposed on them by Part Two of the Teachers' Standards.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

9. Monitoring and Reviewing

The Academy will monitor the impact of this policy using logs of reported incidents and the policy and Academy practices will be reviewed by the governors annually or more regularly if required, in the light of any incidents that have taken place. The Academy is also mindful of significant new developments in the use of the technologies, or perceived new threats, in response periodically we will seek professional advice to ensure we are responding appropriately.

Appendix A

Guidance on Responding to Misuse Incidents

Facebook Instagram, Pinterest, Vine or other similar channels (for incidents of cyberbullying or inappropriate behaviour)

- If you know the identity of the perpetrator, contacting their parents or, in the case of older children, the young person themselves to ask that the offending content be removed.
- Failing that, having kept a copy of the page or message in question, delete the content and take action as appropriate.
- For messages, on Facebook the 'delete and report / block user facilities' are found in the 'Actions' dropdown on the page on which the message appears.
- For whole pages, the 'unfriend and report / block user facilities' are at the bottom of the left hand column.
 - Always try to cite which of the Facebook terms and conditions have been violated at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php> or community standards at <http://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/>.
- If the page is authored by someone under 13 years of age then click on the following link: http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage.
- To remove a post from a profile, hover over it and on the right there will be a cross to delete it.
- To report abuse or harassment, email abuse@facebook.com. Facebook will acknowledge receipt of your email and start looking into your complaint within 24 hours. They will get back to you within 72 hours of receiving your complaint.
- If all else fails, support the victim, if they wish, to contact CEOP' (Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre) <http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- If the person subject of the alleged abuse is determined to continue using Facebook, they might want to delete their account and start again under a different name. Deletion can be undertaken via https://ssl.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=delete_account.
- They must be made aware of the privacy issues that might have given rise to their problem in the first place:
 - You will not bully, intimidate, or harass any user.
 - You will not provide any false personal information on Facebook, or create an account for anyone other than yourself without permission.
 - You will not post content or take any action on Facebook that infringes or violates someone else's rights or otherwise violates the law.

The Academy policies and protocols on child protection, safeguarding and e-safety **must be** followed and complied with if any apparent, suspected or actual misuse appears to involve illegal or inappropriate activity:

- Child sexual abuse images.
- Adult material which potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act.
- Criminally racist material.
- Other criminal conduct, activity or materials.

- Any actions online that impact on the Academy and can potentially damage the Academy's (or someone in the Academy's) reputation in some way or are deemed as being inappropriate will **always** be responded to.
- In the event that any member of staff, student or parent/carer is found to be posting libellous or inflammatory comments on social networking sites professional advice will be sought by the Academy. Possible outcomes are that the police will be involved and/or legal action pursued by the Academy and/or disciplinary action may result.
- The current Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) guidance '*Guidelines on prosecuting cases involving communications sent via social media*' came into effect on 20 June 2013 and set out the approach that prosecutors should take when making decisions in relation to cases where it is alleged that criminal offences have been committed by the sending of a communication via social media.

Document Control

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Signed – Headteacher	