DUDLEY ACADEMIES TRUST
Social Media

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Our mission: Working together we will develop inspirational schools which instil ambition and desire in young learners, open their minds, widen their horizons and equip them to succeed in a challenging world.

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Introduction

Social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram etc.) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. Dudley Academies Trust recognises the benefits and opportunities, which a social media presence should offer. Our staff, students and parents/carers are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. 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 Dudley Academies Trust, its staff, parents, carers and students.

Scope

This policy is subject to the Trust's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.

This policy

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the Academy.
- 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 Academy.

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

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

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

Digital communications with students are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via the Academy social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

SLT

- 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.

Social Media Manager

- Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
- Attending appropriate training.
- Store account details, including passwords securely.
- Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the accounts.
- 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 monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via Academy accounts.

Monitoring

Academy/Trust accounts must be monitored regularly. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received over the weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention are essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on an Academy/Trust social media account.

Behaviour

- The Trust requires that all users of 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 the staff. Trust/Academy 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 Trust.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered

extremely seriously by the Trust 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 Trust policies. The Trust 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 Trust will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the Trust will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the Trust 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 Trust, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, Trust users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues using a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed Trust protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should 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

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

- If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via Trust/Academy owned social media accounts.

- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on Trust/Academy social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any Trust/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 personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with or impacts on the Trust/Academy, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the Trust/Academy 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 Trust/Academy are outside the scope of this policy.
- Where excessive personal use of social media in the Trust/Academy is suspected and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken

Students

- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior students of their Academy on any personal social media network account.
- Students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about their Academy. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved using the Trust's behaviour policy.

Parents/Carers

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

Managing Trust/Academy social media accounts

The Do's

- Make it clear who is posting the 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.

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the Academy into disrepute.
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material.
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation.
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances.