

SOKE EDUCATION TRUST

Social Media Policy

Approved via Governorhub

Approved date	26 April 2024
Review date	April 2028



Social Media Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Set guidelines and rules on the use of school's social media channels
- Establish clear expectations for the way members of the school community engage with each other online
- Support the school's policies on data protection, online safety and safeguarding

Staff, students and parents/carers are required to read, understand and comply with this social media policy.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school/working hours or otherwise.

It applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using:

- School IT facilities and equipment
- Equipment belonging to members of staff and pupils
- Any other IT/Internet-enabled equipment

All members of the school should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, harassment, child protection, safer recruitment, and online safety and ICT acceptable use policies.

Definitions

Social Media - For the purposes of this document, 'social media' is considered to include all technologies that allow individuals to communicate and share information (including photos and video). This includes group messaging services such as WhatsApp.

Use of Official Social Media Accounts

The official social media channels may include:

- Facebook
- X (formerly Twitter)
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

These accounts are managed staff who have been delegated responsibility. Staff members who have not been authorised by Headteacher/COO to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.

If you have suggestions for something you'd like to appear on our school social media channel(s), please speak to the Headteacher or COO for Central team

When using the preferred social media account e.g. Facebook/X/Instagram. The school or Trust may use it to:

- Alerts about changes (e.g. changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)
- Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school and Trust **will not** post on social media accounts:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people
- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

Moderation

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will delete as soon as reasonably possible:

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments
- Comments we consider to be spam
- Personal information, such as telephone numbers, address details, etc.
- Posts that advertise commercial activity or ask for donations

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users, following the school's complaints policy. If users are repeatedly abusive or inappropriate, they will be blocked.

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will also ensure that all content shared on social media platforms is age appropriate for the school community.

Following other social media users

The school:

- Will only 'like' other social media pages with a non-commercial interest – being 'liked' by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind
- May follow other users. However, if you follow us on X (formerly Twitter) – being followed by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind

Personal Use of Social Media by Staff

At Soke Education Trust we recommend that members of staff make their private social media profiles unidentifiable to pupils, we understand many staff will use sites such as X (formerly Twitter) or LinkedIn for professional purposes.

The school expects all staff (including governors and volunteers) to consider the safety of pupils and the risks (reputational and financial) to the school when using social media channels, including when

doing so in a personal capacity. Staff are also responsible for checking and maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts.

Staff members will report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

When using social media, staff **must not**:

- Use personal accounts to conduct school business
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, pupils past or present
- Complain about their own or other schools, individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Reference or share information about individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Post images of pupils
- Express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school
- Link their social media profile to their work email account
- Use personal social media during timetabled teaching time except in an agreed professional capacity

Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the staff code of conduct.

Any communication received from current pupils (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.

Staff should not have contact via personal accounts with past pupils (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using via official school channels).

Personal Use of Social Media by Pupils

Soke Education Trust does not recommend or encourage pupils to use social media, however where they do so they should:

- Be respectful to members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful to other pupils and parents/carers
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure
- Pupils **should not** use social media to:
- Complain about individual members of staff
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other pupils or parents/carers
- Post images of other pupils without their permission

Any concerns about a pupil's social media use will be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Personal Use of Social Media by Parents/Carers

The school expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our pupils.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:

- Be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times

- Be respectful of, and about, other parents/carers and other pupils and children
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

Parents/carers **should not** use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils
- Complain about the school or make comments that are disrespectful or rude
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils
- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents
- Post images of children other than their own

WhatsApp groups

We expect parents/carers and staff members to follow the above social media guidelines when using school, class or team WhatsApp groups.

Training and Awareness

During each academic year training and awareness is provided for staff (including those with access to post on official social media accounts), pupils, and parents/carers on the use of social media practices. This may initially be included as part of staff induction, via regular staff training opportunities, through online safety events and the school newsletter and other forms of communication.

Monitoring and Review

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, for legitimate business purposes. This includes ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems, and for the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy, and ensure that it reflects the needs and circumstances of the school.

Links to Other Policies

Acceptable Use policy

Behaviour policy

Mobile Phone Use policy

Safeguarding & Child Protection policy

Staff Code of Conduct policy