



Social Media (Employee) Policy

Policy Code:	HR22
Policy Start Date:	March 2013
Policy Review Date:	March 2017

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HR3 Grievance Procedure
- HR5 Acceptable Use Policy
- HR6 Data Protection Policy
- HR12 Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- ICT2 E-Safety Policy (Staff)
- SW5 Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Trust Code of Conduct



1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning. This technology can provide both educational and professional benefits. This policy is in place to minimise the risk to The Trust through use of social media, whilst recognising any benefits its use may present.
- 1.2 Where Academies are mentioned throughout this policy, this also includes the Robert de Cheney Boarding House at The Priory Academy LSST, all parts of the Keyworth Centre at The Priory City of Lincoln Academy and the Early Years setting at The Priory Witham Academy, as well as the Trust's French Centre.

2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of all employees, trustees and governors to adhere to this policy. The Trust is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders who utilise social media technology for professional purposes described below, including staff and students, do so in a safe and responsible manner.
- 2.2 All employees, students, trustees and governors should follow the guidelines and recommended practices for professional social media communication between staff, as well as social media communication between staff and students.
- 2.3 The Trust recognises the public and pervasive nature of social media communications, as well as the fact that in this digital era, the lines between professional and personal endeavours are sometimes blurred. All employees, trustees and governors should also follow the guidelines and recommended practices for use of personal social media by staff.
- 2.4 The Pay, Performance and HR committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Strategic ICT Coordinator. The Strategic ICT Coordinator will review this policy bi-annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflect best practice.
- 2.5 Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

3 Definition of Social Media

- 3.1 **Social media** are defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+, and Flickr.



Professional social media is work-related social media activity that is either school-based (e.g., a Facebook page for an Academy or a teacher establishing a blog for his/her class), or non-school-based (e.g. a twitter account to promote a Trust service)

Personal social media use is non work-related social media activity (e.g. an employee establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for his/her own personal use).

4 Maintaining Separate Professional and Personal E-mail Accounts

- 4.1 Employees who decide to engage in professional social media activities should maintain separate professional and personal e-mail addresses. Employees should not use their personal e-mail address or other personal identification for professional social media activities; rather, they should use a professional e-mail address that is completely separate from any personal social media they maintain. In addition employees should not use their professional email address or professional logins for personal social media accounts.

5 Communication with Students

- 5.1 Employees who work with students and communicate with them through professional social media sites should follow these guidelines:
- (a) Professional social media sites that are Academy-based should be designed to address reasonable instructional, educational, or extra-curricular program matters.
 - (b) Each Academy must keep a file of active professional social media accounts and what they are used for.

6 Guidance Regarding Professional Social Media Sites

- 6.1 Employees should treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or a professional workplace. The same standards expected in professional settings are expected on professional social media sites. If a particular type of behaviour is inappropriate in the classroom or a professional workplace, then that behaviour is also inappropriate on the professional social media site.
- 6.2 Employees should exercise caution, sound judgment, and common sense when using professional social media sites.
- 6.3 When establishing professional social media sites, employees should consider the intended audience for the site. Employees must also consider the level of



privacy assigned to the site; specifically whether the site should be a private network (e.g. it is limited to a particular class or particular grade within a school) or a public network (e.g. anyone within the school, a larger group). It is recommended practice for professional social media sites to be private networks, unless there is a specific educational need for the site to be a public network.

- 6.4 Employees should obtain Academy SLT approval by using a registration form before setting up a professional social media presence. These forms can be obtained from the Federation's Strategic ICT Co-ordinator.
- 6.5 All new professional social media sites should be added to the Academy's list of such sites before they are used.
- 6.6 Professional social media sites should include language identifying the sites as professional social media sites to differentiate them from personal sites.
- 6.7 Employees should use privacy settings to control access to their professional social media sites with the objective that professional social media communications only reach the intended audience. However, employees must be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the Internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change an employee's current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, each employee has a responsibility to understand the rules of the social media site being utilised.
- 6.8 Professional social media communication must remain legal and reflect the ethos of the Priory Federation of Academies Trust. Confidential information must not be disclosed and prohibitions must be placed on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory or threatening language.
- 6.9 If images of students are to be posted online, a media consent form must be placed on file at the Academy for each child featured. This form can be obtained from the data team at each site. If an Academy wish to post online an image of a student alongside their full name then additional consent must be sought from parents/carers. Employees must not post photos of colleagues on professional social media sites without prior permission of the employee in the photo.
- 6.10 Employees are responsible for monitoring and providing feedback regarding their work-related professional social media sites. The monitoring responsibilities include reviewing the professional social media sites on a regular basis. If an employee discovers questionable communications or behaviour on professional social media sites, they must contact a member of the SLT for the Academy for assistance. If employees decide to create a professional social media site and they are notified of questionable



communications or behaviour on their site, they should remove the material and/or contact a member of the Academy's SLT.

7 Personal Social Media Use

- 7.1 In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, employees should not communicate with students who are currently enrolled in any of The Trust's Academies on personal social media sites.
- 7.2 All digital communications with students/parents/carers should be on a professional level and only carried out using official Academy systems. Staff must be clear that, if professional media sites are legitimately accessed by family members or friendship groups, those sites are used only for the intended professional purposes.

8 Guidance Regarding Personal Social Media Sites

- 8.1 Staff should exercise caution and common sense when using personal social media sites:
- (a) As a recommended practice, employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, employees must be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the Internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change an employee's current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees are responsible for understanding the rules of the social media site being utilised.
 - (b) It is not recommended that employees "tag" or upload photos of their colleagues, volunteers, contractors or vendors without the prior permission of the individuals being tagged.
 - (c) Personal social media use, including out of hours use, has the potential to result in disruption at the Academy or within The Trust as a whole.
 - (d) Employees are prohibited from posting or disclosing personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites.
 - (e) Employees must not use any of Academies' or Trust logos or make representations that their personal social media sites speak in an official capacity. Employees should make it clear in personal social media postings, or in their personal profiles, that they are speaking on



their own behalf. Employees should write in the first person and use a personal email address and other identifiers, not professional ones.

- (f) If employees see social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on The Trust they should contact a member of their Academy SLT.

9 Applicability of Policies and Other Laws

- 9.1 This policy provides guidance intended to supplement, not supersede, existing safeguarding and child protection laws, policies and procedures. In the same way, it supplements, not supersedes the Acceptable Use, Code of Conduct and Data Protection Policies.

10 Social Media Misuse

- 10.1 Breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal. Any employee suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with The Trust's investigation which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.
- 10.2 Employees must make or become involved in any social media communications that could damage The Trust's business interests or reputation, even indirectly.
- 10.3 Employees must not use social media to defame or disparage The Trust, its employees or any third party, to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties, to make false or misleading statements, or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.
- 10.4 Employees must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as The Trust's performance, or do anything to jeopardise The Trust's confidential information or intellectual property.
- 10.5 Employees must not make any reference on personal social media to students, parents/carers or Academy staff and must not engage in online discussion on personal matters relating to members of the Academy and/or Federation community.

11 Monitoring

- 11.1 To ensure that Trust policies are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes, The Trust reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using Trust IT resources and communications systems. This includes, but is not limited to, social media



postings and activities. Employees consent to such monitoring by their use of such resources and systems.

12 Recruitment

- 12.1 The Trust may use internet searches, which may include social media sites to perform due diligence activities on candidates in the course of recruitment. When this occurs, The Trust will act in accordance with the Data Protection and Equal Opportunities obligations.

13 Critical Incidents

- 13.1 In the event of a critical incident occurring on any Academy site employees are prohibited from sharing any information about the incident, or the Academy's response, on personal or professional social media unless otherwise instructed to do so by the Headteacher or a member of SLT. This includes not revealing any information about equipment tests, evacuations and meeting points.

14 Policy change

- 14.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by The Priory Federation of Academies Trust.



The Priory Federation of Academies Trust

Social Media (Employee) Policy

This Policy has been approved by the Pay, Performance and HR Committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.