



# Social media policy

## for school staff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Parneet Kang'.

Parneet Kang  
Principal and Sole Proprietor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'William Holland'.

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William Holland  
Chair of Trustees

REVIWED: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 - Parneet Kang

The Emscote school actively encourage the responsible use of social media. Responsible use of social media can be positive for learning and teaching. It can also be personally enjoyable and beneficial.

This policy will make clear what standards are expected of anyone who works for the school and uses social media as well as what actions may be taken when it is considered a member of staff may have breached this policy.

This policy applies to all staff use of social media, including:

- 1 on behalf of the school;
- 2 as part of their work directly with pupils ;
- 3 in their wider professional lives;
- 4 in their personal lives.

In the policy, the word staff includes temporary and casual staff, agency staff, and volunteers during their time working with the school. This policy works alongside other legislation, DFE statutory guidance, and other school and local authority policies such as Code of employee conduct.

When using social media at any time;

1 Staff must not place a child at risk of harm. Staff must follow statutory and school safeguarding procedures at all times when using social media.

2 Staff must report all situations where any child is at potential risk by using relevant statutory and school child protection procedures. Staff must not allow their use of social media to affect their ability to do their job in any way.

3 Staff must maintain the reputation of the school, its staff, its pupils, its parents, its trustees, its wider community and their employers.

4 Staff must not contribute or access any social media content which is illegal, discriminatory, sexual, or otherwise offensive when linked in any way to the school. This link could be, as examples, by identification with the school, during the working day, on school premises or when using school equipment. Such behaviours may also result in criminal proceedings. Staff must recognise that contributing or accessing any social media content which is illegal, discriminatory, sexual or otherwise offensive during personal use could lead to damage to their professional reputation or damage to the reputation of the school. This damage would breach the social media policy. And, again, such behaviours may also result in criminal proceedings.

5 Staff must not use social media to criticise or insult their school, its staff, its pupils, its parents, its trustees or its wider community.

6 Staff should be aware that there are other, more appropriate, methods of raising valid concerns about their school and its staff. Staff must not use social media to harass, bully or intimidate any pupil, parent, member of staff, governor or other member of the wider school community.

7 Staff must not breach school confidentiality. School staff must follow their school data protection responsibilities when using social media. Staff must not reveal any other private or confidential school matters when using any social media.

8 Staff are responsible for their actions (and its consequences) whenever they use social media. Staff are responsible for all their social media content. Staff must understand that social media offers no guarantee of privacy and that any content they produce can be shared more widely by others. A member of staff's professional reputation or the reputation of the school could be damaged by content, perhaps which was intended to be private, being shared more widely than intended. Staff would still be held responsible for any consequential breach of this policy as they were responsible for producing the original content.

9 Staff are responsible for the configuration and use of any personal social media accounts they have. They are responsible for determining the level of security and privacy of all their social media content.

10 Staff must raise all doubts, questions and concerns related to social media with school leaders. Staff must seek advice if they are not sure if any particular use of social media (or a related action) is appropriate or would potentially breach this policy. Staff cannot rely on their ignorance or lack of knowledge to defend any breach of this policy. Staff must be given explicit permission to use social media on behalf of their school by a school leader. Staff must have separate user accounts for school use of social media and must not use school social media for any personal discussions or for any individual personal matters even if initiated by other members of the school community.

When using social media in staff's wider professional life Social media is a useful tool for engaging and collaborating with the wider education community. Staff must be clear that their social media content is personal and not endorsed or supported by their school. Staff can identify their school where appropriate but cannot use account names, school branding or anything else that could imply that the content is official school content.

Staff must be particularly careful to not reveal any details of staff, pupils, parents or other members of the school community that make it possible to identify any individuals.

Staff must use appropriate behaviour and language at all times.

The personal use of social media must neither interfere with a member of staff's ability to maintain their professional reputation nor impact on the reputation of the school.

**Staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure the proper separation of their professional and personal lives.**

**Staff must not use school social networking accounts for personal content.**

Staff must respect the wishes and privacy of any other members of their school community with whom they have personal social media contact. Staff must not use personal social media with any child with whom they solely have, or have had, a staff/pupil relationship. This includes ex-pupils until they reach the age of 18.

School staff can have social media contact with pupils or ex-pupils where other appropriate relationships exist. As examples, a pupil who is also a family member or a family friend. These relationships must be open and transparent. The member of staff can report these social media relationships to senior leaders for their own protection. Staff must retain any communications to pupils or ex-pupils rejecting any approaches made on social media and ensure that they are professional in tone. Staff must also consider reporting these to senior leaders to ensure transparency.

Staff must not use personal social media with anyone with whom they solely have a staff/parent relationship. Staff at schools can often have more complex relationships than just being a member of staff or a parent. As examples, staff can also be parents (of pupils at the school), in relationships or have friendships with other staff or parents; or also governors. Any member of staff can report any social media relationships to senior leaders for their own protection.

Staff can only use social media when no pupils are present and during breaks or non-directed time.

Excessive use of social media at school Staff must not spend an excessive amount of time while at the school on personal use of social media. They must ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their duties.

The school reserves the right to monitor all staff internet use, including when staff are making personal use of social media, on any school systems or equipment. Misuse of social media – even personal use – on school equipment is a breach of the school's acceptable use policy. All staff are required to adhere to this policy. Staff should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the school, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal. Similarly, where there is a serious breach of this policy, action may be taken in respect of other members of staff who are not employees (volunteers) which may result in the termination of their appointment.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a student(or group of students) or parent has made inappropriate/insulting/threatening comments about them, or other staff members, on a social networking site; then they should consider reporting this to the head teacher so that the appropriate process can be followed and support can be offered to the employee.