Victoria Academies Trust

Social Media Policy

Date of last review	February 2025	Review period	(non-statutory)
Date of next review	February 2027	AC or Board approved	Board
Type of policy	TRUST	Signed (chair)	

Introduction to social media policy

The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that the use of social media is responsibly undertaken and that confidentiality of children and staff, and the reputation of the Trust and its schools, are protected. For clarity, social media applies to personal web space such as, but not limited to; social media sites (for example Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp), blogs, microblogs such as X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, and content sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube, or any site or service deemed as 'social media' by the Trust.

Legislation and guidance

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social media applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and potentially other relevant legislation. Staff must also operate in line with the Trust's policies (see section 5). In addition, it is important to understand that there is a distinction between use of Trust-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

It is vital that every member of staff understands that children under the age of 13 should not be allowed access to, or be encouraged to create, their own personal social media accounts. Children under the age of 13 are not legally allowed to use social media channels such as Facebook and X. Any communication received by staff from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer. In addition, if any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported.

Expected conduct on social media

It is important and expected that staff follow the following guidance:

- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the Trust or school and members of its community on any social media accounts, unless it is an official post or retweeting school information;
- Staff should not comment on the Trust or school, or any other Trust or school, official social media page from their personal account;
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the Trust in any posts or comments related to the Trust on any social media accounts;
- Staff should not accept any current student of any age or any ex-pupil of the Trust under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account, with the exception of relatives;
- Never 'friend' a student at any school in the Trust where they are working onto their social networking site;
- Be conscious at all times of the need to keep personal and professional/school lives separate;
- Individuals should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between the Trust and their personal interests;
- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the Trust, or anyone at, or connected with, the Trust;

➢ Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal nor professional reputation, nor the Trust's reputation, is compromised by inappropriate postings.

➢ Staff must regularly review and update their privacy settings on social media to protect personal information

Inappropriate and unprofessional use of social media

➢ It is important and expected that staff understand what is inappropriate and unprofessional use of social media, and adhere to the following guidance:

➢ Staff should not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the Trust, or a specific school of the Trust, or any individual associated, into disrepute;

➢ Staff should not represent their personal views as those of the Trust, or any school within the Trust, on any social media;

➢ Staff should not discuss personal information about other children the Trust, any school of the Trust and the wider community they interact with, on any social media;

➢ Staff should not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame children, their family members, colleagues, or other professionals, organisations or Trusts;

➢ Staff should not identify themselves as members of the Trust, or any school of the Trust, in their personal web-space, unless specifically linked to an approved job role within the Trust community where it serves a purpose to professionally market the Trust or their school. This is to prevent information being linked with the Trust and its schools and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, students and parents and the wider school community;

➢ Children should not have contact through any personal social media with any member of staff. If children and members of the wider Trust, or an individual school's community, wish to communicate with staff, they should only do so through official Trust or individual school sites created for this purpose;

➢ Photographs, videos or any other types of images of children and their families, or images depicting staff members, clothing with school logos or images identifying school premises, should not be published on personal or public web space without prior permission from the Trust, except for reposting of approved marketing material;

Related policies and documents

- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures
- Safeguarding Procedures (Visitors and Volunteers)
- E-safety Policy (for children)
- Remote Learning and Safeguarding Policy
- ICT acceptable use policy