



ACADEMY SOCIAL
MEDIA POLICY 2015
(Staff & Volunteers)

DRAFT

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ACADEMY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (Staff & Volunteers)

Newbridge High School Academy is an 11-14 mixed high school with a designated specialism in sport.

Introduction

The Internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.

While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that the Academy staff, volunteers and contractors are expected to follow when using social media (referred to as staff for the purposes of this policy).

It is crucial that students, parents and public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of students and other staff and the reputation of the school is safeguarded.

Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and profession lives separate.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Newbridge High School Academy Governing Body, and all teaching and other staff, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school, teacher trainees and other trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school (see sections 4, 5, 6 and Appendices A and B).

This policy applies to personal webspace such as social networking sites (for example Facebook, MySpace), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. The internet is a fast moving

technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Newbridge High School Academy is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Common law duty of confidentiality
- Data Protection Act 1998.
- The Prevent Duty 2015

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, e.g. student and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality School business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations
- Politically sensitive information.

Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996 Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Newbridge High School Academy could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc. or who defame a third party while at work may render Newbridge High School Academy liable to the injured party.

PRINCIPLES – BE PROFESSIONAL, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL

Staff must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school and your personal interests.

You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the Academy into disrepute.

You must not represent your personal views as those of the Academy on any social medium.

You must not discuss personal information about students, the Academy or other professionals you interact with as part of your job on social media.

You must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations, or the Academy.

You must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

This section contains detailed guidance for all staff and should be read in conjunction with The Academy ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any student or former students under 18, whether from Academy or any other school unless the students are family members.

Academy does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

Staff members must not have any contact with students' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from students, or former students under 18, they receive in their personal social media accounts. Instead, if they receive such requests from students who are not family members, they must discuss these in general terms in class.

On leaving Academy employment, staff members must not contact Academy's students by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact students from their former schools by means of personal social media.

Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues, and other parties and school corporate information must not be discussed on their personal workspace.

Photographs, videos or any other types of image of students and their families or images depicting staff members wearing clothing with school logos or images identifying sensitive school premises must not be published on personal webpage.

School email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the employer itself.

Academy corporate, service or team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal webspace.

Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place.

Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

Participating online on the internet – Social Networking – Blogging or other media

When participating on line as a member of the Academy, you must follow the standards of behaviour set out in this policy and, when using the Academy's computer systems, the Academy ICT Acceptable Use Policy. When representing the Academy in an official capacity you should conduct yourself online in the same way as you would with other media or public forums, such as when speaking at conferences, and disclose your position as a representative of your Academy. Academy staff are expected and required to behave with the utmost integrity at all times and to be ambassadors for the Academy. This applies even if you are using 'civil pages' and communicating online with other educationalists.

Posting Information online

Staff must ensure they have appropriate authorisation to post official information on social networking sites and that it does not conflict with any of the Standards of Behaviour. Unauthorised disclosure of information is very serious and disciplinary action will be taken for failing to comply.

If you are participating on line privately at home, or away from the office, you are advised not to associate yourself with the Academy. If you do, you must ensure that nobody could reasonably interpret your views and expressions as those of the Academy or anyone connected to it, and must not in any way bring the Academy into disrepute or damage its reputation with its employees or the general public.

You should not disclose any knowledge and official information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the Academy unless you are authorised to do so.

Posting Personal Comments and Opinions online

Any postings made during work time or privately at home must comply with the ACADEMY policies. That means you must not represent the Academy when you are expressing personal opinions.

Personal opinions posted online that are embarrassing or disrespectful to the Academy; offensive or could bring the Academy into disrepute, including derogatory and rude remarks about fellow employees, students, parents or other professionals will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken against employees who breach this policy.

Television Appearances

Permission must be sought before anyone takes part in any media activity that may identify you as a member of the Academy or may require time off work. Employees appearing on television must not disclose any knowledge and official information, or make commitments on behalf of the Academy unless authorised to do so.

Other media - newspapers

You must not pass official information on or make it available to any person eg. newspapers, journalists or give interviews about the Academy without appropriate authorisation. Authorised interviews must be professional and comply with the ACADEMY policies. You must not represent the Academy when expressing personal opinions. Disciplinary action will be taken if personal opinions include derogatory and rude remarks about employees, students, parents or other stakeholders or the ACADEMY business.

Trade Union representatives are required to comply with the Academy's Standards of Behaviour when participating in any media related activities. Although they are not required to obtain permission before taking part, and reasonably commenting on concerns relating to pay, terms and conditions of employment and lawful trade union campaigns, they must make it clear they are speaking on behalf of the union. They must not disclose without authorisation any information that they obtain as a member of the Academy and through their work in the ACADEMY.

TELEPHONES

You should not use a personal mobile phone in any teaching area, in sight of students or around the school.

Personal calls on mobiles should be made during periods of non-contact time, such as break. Never use the camera on a personal phone to photograph, voice record or film a student or allow yourself to be photographed, voice recorded or filmed by a student except on school equipment for legitimate educational purposes.

Never contact students or parents from a personal mobile or give your number to students or parents. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact a school mobile should be used. In the event of an emergency this may not be avoidable and common sense must prevail.

There will be some circumstances (e.g. particular types of trip), where the Headteacher will permit the use of a staff member's personal phone in order to enable safety of the group. This will be agreed in advance.

Never use a handheld phone whilst driving as this is a criminal offence.

All telephone contact with parents/carers must be made on the school phone, a note being kept using the 'meetings & telephone call' form.

BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with the Academy Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality or defamation or damage to the reputation of the Academy or any illegal acts or acts that render Newbridge High School Academy liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal

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