



# **Social Media Policy**

Approved by Trust Board: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## **1. ABOUT THIS POLICY**

- 1.1 This policy is in place to minimise the risks to Derby Diocesan Academy Trust ("the Trust", "DDAT") and its schools through use of social media.
- 1.2 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, Whatsapp, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia, Tik Tok, Instagram and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to use of social media for work purposes as well as personal use that may affect the Trust or its schools in any way.
- 1.3 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers, working for the Trust.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the Trust may amend it at any time following consultation with recognised Trade Unions. This policy has been implemented following consultation with all recognised Trade Unions.

## **2 COMPLIANCE WITH RELATED POLICIES AND AGREEMENTS**

- 2.1 Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the Trust's other policies. If an internet post would breach any of its policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from using social media to:
  - 2.1.1 breach any obligations contained in those policies relating to confidentiality;
  - 2.1.2 breach the Disciplinary Policy;
  - 2.1.3 breach the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy;
  - 2.1.4 breach the Equal Opportunities Policy;
  - 2.1.5 breach the Code of Conduct Policy;
  - 2.1.6 breach the E-Safety Policy;
  - 2.1.7 breach the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
  - 2.1.8 breach the Data Protection Policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague online); or
  - 2.1.9 breach any other laws or regulatory requirements.
- 2.2 Staff should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the Trust and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the Trust.
- 2.3 Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **3 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 3.1 Personal use of social media is not permitted during working hours or by means of DDAT's computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. In exceptional circumstances with prior approval from the headteacher staff may be permitted to use social media for personal use.
- 3.2 Staff may use their own personal devices to access private social media platforms during any allocated lunch breaks if not in the presence of pupils. DDAT devices must not be used for personal use.

### **4 PROHIBITED USE**

- 4.1 You must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the Trust (or any of its schools) interests or reputation, even indirectly.
- 4.2 You must not use social media to defame or disparage DDAT, DDAT staff 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.
- 4.3 You must not express opinions on the Trust or school's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Headteacher, or a senior member of the Central Trust team, or otherwise in accordance with paragraph 5 of this policy. You may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.
- 4.4 You must not post comments about pupils or sensitive Trust-related topics, such as DDAT's performance or confidential information. You must not tag the school or Trust into the post or include DDAT's logos or other trademarks in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media.
- 4.5 The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your employment are the Trust's confidential information. On termination of employment you must provide DDAT with a copy of all such information, delete all such information from your personal social networking accounts and destroy any further copies of such information that you may have.
- 4.6 Any misuse of social media whether intentional or accidental should be reported to the Headteacher.

### **5 BUSINESS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 5.1 The Trust and its schools have social media accounts, which may be used only in accordance with this policy. If it is appropriate and in compliance with your duties to speak on behalf of the Trust/school in a social media environment, you must still seek prior approval for such communication from the Headteacher (who is trained in the appropriate use of social media within the school). The Headteacher may require you to undergo training before you do so and impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to your activities.
- 5.2 Likewise, if you are contacted for comments about the Trust/school for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, you must direct the

enquiry to the school's controller/Central Trust team and do not respond without written approval.

- 5.3 The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the remainder of this policy.

## **6 GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 6.1 You should make it clear in personal social media postings, or in your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal email address. There should not be a link in personal posts between the individual and the school.
- 6.2 Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.
- 6.3 If you disclose your affiliation with the Trust or any of DDAT's schools on your profile or in any social media postings, you must state that your views do not represent those of the Trust or the school (unless you are authorised to speak on DDAT's behalf as set out in paragraphs 4.3 or 5). You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to pupils, parents, carers and colleagues. You should ensure your settings are set to private where possible to ensure they do not compromise the Trust or the school's position and do not give the name of the school or Trust.
- 6.4 You should check your privacy settings on a regular basis.
- 6.5 Staff should be mindful that comments in private groups may come into the public domain or to the attention of the school and where appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.
- 6.6 Do not follow or accept friend requests from a person you believe to be either a parent, guardian, relative or pupil at the school. The only exception would be where a family member or pre-existing relationship then also becomes a parent or pupil at the school.
- 6.7 If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from posting it until you have discussed it with your manager.
- 6.8 If you see social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Trust or any of DDAT's schools, you should contact your line manager.

## **7 MONITORING**

- 7.1 The Trust reserves the right to monitor social media activity including but not limited to social media postings and activities to ensure that the Trust's rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes.
- 7.2 For further information on monitoring of IT resources and communications systems, please refer to the school's IT policy.
- 7.3 For further information, please refer to the school's E-Safety Policy.

## 8 **BREACH OF THIS POLICY**

- 8.1 Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with the Trust's investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.
- 8.2 You may be required to remove any social media content that the Trust considers to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.