



Social Media Policy

To ensure all staff, Directors and Academy Council Governors are aware of the principles that pupils, staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media on behalf of Acorn Education Trust.

The internet provides a range of social media tools that create a range of opportunities, including allowing educational organisations to develop communication systems and to interact with the public.

While recognising the benefits of these new technologies, Acorn Education Trust is aware of the problems that can be incurred when using social media.

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Contents:

Statement of intent

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Related policies](#)
3. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
4. [Creating accounts on behalf of the Trust](#)
5. [Content on behalf of the Trust](#)
6. [Monitoring and moderation](#)
7. [Breaches of the policy](#)

Appendices

[Appendix A – Social media site creation approval form](#)

Statement of intent

This policy has been created with the aim to ensure:

- Social media is used responsibly.
- Relevant legislation is complied with.
- Confidentiality and data protection of pupils and staff.
- Staff and pupils are aware of the correct way to use social media.
- The reputation of the Trust is not affected by the use of social media.
- Parents and the public have confidence in Acorn Education Trust's decisions and services.
- Staff members' personal and professional lives are kept separate.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy will have due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to:

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by Police and Justice Act 2006

1.2. 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
- Obscene Publications Act 1959
- Protection of Children Act 1988
- Defamation Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1995
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1998

2. Related policies

2.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. Staff must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Acorn Education Trust into disrepute.

3.2. Staff must not represent their personal views as those of the Trust or its schools on any social medium.

3.3. Staff members' personal information, or pupils' personal information, must not be discussed on social media.

3.4. Authors must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information.

- 3.5. Social media must not be used as a platform to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues or other professionals.
- 3.6. All content expressed on social media accounts must not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.
- 3.7. Staff members must act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing to social media sites.
- 3.8. All Trust social media profiles and accounts will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Trust Business Team.
- 3.9. Staff members participating in social media are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the Trust.
- 3.10. Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another.
- 3.11. The Trust's social media accounts must comply with site rules at all times, particularly with regards to the minimum age limit for use of the site.
 - It should be noted that each networking site has their own rules which must be followed.

4. Creating accounts on behalf of the Trust

- 4.1. Social media sites can only be created and monitored by the Trust Business Team and other designated staff members.
- 4.2. There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for the creation of social media accounts on behalf of the Trust.
- 4.3. Official Trust or School profiles and accounts must not be created for trivial reasons.
- 4.4. All Trust social media accounts must be approved by the Trust Business Team, via the Social Media Site Creation Approval Form, before being created.
- 4.5. The Business and Finance Director must be consulted about the purpose of the proposed site and its content.
- 4.6. A school social media account must be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by staff members, and ideally should be linked to an official school or Trust email account.
- 4.7. Consideration must be given to the following aspects:
 - The purpose for using social media
 - Whether the overall investment will achieve the pedagogical aim
 - The level of interactive engagement with the site
 - Whether pupils, staff or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account

- How much time and effort are staff members willing to commit to the proposed site
- A clear plan outlining aspects such as how long the site will last
- How the success of the site will be evaluated

4.8. Approval for participating, on behalf of the Trust, on sites created by third parties must be obtained from the Trust Business Team.

5. Content on behalf of the Trust

- 5.1. All content and information provided on social media accounts must be worthwhile and accurate.
- 5.2. Staff members must not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the Trust without authorisation.
- 5.3. All staff must be made aware of the relevant child protection, privacy, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment and copyright law that may apply to the content.
- 5.4. Staff members must respect their audience and be sensitive in the tone of language used when discussing topics that others may find controversial or objectionable.
- 5.5. Consideration must be given to the type of language that is used, in order to ensure it is appropriate for the audience, e.g. swearing and innuendos are highly inappropriate on Trust sites.
- 5.6. Personal opinions should not be expressed on any Trust social media accounts.
- 5.7. Trust account profiles must always include the school or Trust logo or brand to ensure transparency and confidence in the site.
- 5.8. The school or Trust logo should, where possible, link back to the relevant page on the school website.
- 5.9. The initiators of the account must take overall responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the contents of the site up-to-date and relevant.
- 5.10. Images and videos of pupils must not be published without written consent from a parent/guardian.
- 5.11. Content must not identify any child by their full name or allow person identifying information to be published without the written consent of a parent/guardian.
- 5.12. Consideration must be given to the level of engagement of contributors.
 - Measures must be in place to monitor content uploaded by users.

- Permission must be sought from the relevant people before citing or referencing their work.

6. Monitoring and moderation

- 6.1. All content is moderated and reviewed, using the terms of use as guidance.
- 6.2. Moderation of social media content is the responsibility of the individual or team that initiated the account.
- At least two members of staff must be appointed as administrators, whose role it is to review and moderate the content.
 - In case of absence or turnover, other members of staff must be adequately trained and prepared to maintain and moderate the social media accounts.
- 6.3. Sites created for, and contributed to, by pupils must have the strongest privacy settings to prevent breaches of confidentiality.
- Pupils and other young participants on Trust social media accounts must not be able to be identified.
- 6.4. Staff members contributing to Trust accounts must identify who they are.
- Members of staff must disclose their positions within the Trust on Trust social media accounts and profiles.
 - They must never give out their personal information, such as home contact details or email addresses, on these sites.
- 6.5. Inappropriate comments or abuse about the Trust are to be immediately removed, and reported to the Business and Finance Director. Such comments must never be posted on behalf of the Trust.
- 6.6. In the case of illegal content or behaviour, the Business and Finance Director must immediately inform the appropriate authorities, such as the police and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre.
- 6.7. Any media enquiries must be forwarded to the Business and Finance Director immediately.
- Staff members must not communicate with the media without the advice or approval of the Business and Finance Director.
- 6.8. Care must be taken to ensure that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- 6.9. Any proposal to use social media to advertise the Trust, or a third party, must be approved by the Business and Finance Director.

- 6.10. Approval must be obtained from the Trust's Business and Finance Director to mention an external organisation in content or make them a 'friend' or 'follower'.
- 6.11. Individuals wishing to be 'friends' on the Trust's social media platforms must be vetted and approved by the Business and Finance Director before being accepted.
- Their activity must be reviewed regularly and checked against the terms of use.

7. Breaches of the policy

- 7.1. Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member(s) involved, in line with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.
- 7.2. Breaches of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of the Trust may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.
- 7.3. Any action that is taken against breaches of this policy should be according to the relevant disciplinary procedures.

Appendix A

Social media site creation approval form

Use of social media on behalf of Acorn Education Trust must be approved by the Trust Business Team prior to setting up sites.

Please complete this form and return it to the Business and Finance Director.

TEAM DETAILS	
School:	
Department:	
Moderator of site:	
PURPOSE OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA SITE	
(Please describe why you want to set up this site and the content of the site)	
What are your aims and what do you hope to achieve by setting up this site?	
What is the proposed content of the site?	
PROPOSED AUDIENCE OF THE SITE	
Please tick all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of the [school/academy] <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ages: (insert age range)	
<input type="checkbox"/> [School/academy] staff	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members	

- External organisations
- Pupils from other schools
 - Schools involved: (insert names of schools)
- Members of the public
- Others (please provide details)

PROPOSED CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SITE

Please tick all that apply.

- Pupils of (insert school/academy name)
 - Ages: (insert age range)
- (Insert name of school) staff members
- Pupils' family members
- Pupils from other schools
 - Schools involved: (insert names of schools)
- External organisations
- Members of the public
- Others (please provide details)

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SITE

Names of administrators (the site must have at least two approved administrators):	
Names of moderators (the site must have at least two approved moderators):	
Who will vet external contributors?(Please state name and job role)	
Who will host the site?	
Proposed date of going live:	
Proposed date for site closure:	
How do you propose to advertise for contributors?	

If contributors include children, how do you propose to inform and obtain the consent of parents or responsible adults?	
What security measures will you take to prevent unwanted or unsuitable individuals from contributing or becoming 'friends' etc. of the site?	

APPROVAL

(Approval from relevant people must be obtained before the site can be created. The relevant managers must read this form and complete the information below before final approval can be given by the Trust Business Team).