



About this policy

- 1.1 This policy is in place to minimise the risks to the Academy through use of social media and to provide guidance for staff to ensure that social media is used responsibly.
 - 1.2 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia, Whisper, Instagram, Vine, flickr, YouTube, Tumblr and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to the use of social media for Academy business as well as personal use that may affect the Academy in any way.
 - 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the Academy may amend it at any time.
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2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to the Board of Trustees, all teaching and non-teaching staff, trainee teachers, other trainees, volunteers and individuals or external contractors who provide services to Biddulph High School. These individuals are collectively referred to as staff in this policy.
 - 2.2 This policy applies to the personal use of social media and the use of social media for official Academy purposes. This includes any social media sites hosted or maintained on behalf of the Academy.
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3. Personnel responsible for implementing the policy

- 3.1 Our Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for its operation to the Headteacher.
- 3.2 Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks lies with the Headteacher who will review this policy regularly to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.
- 3.3 Leadership and senior staff have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.
- 3.4 All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Headteacher. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Headteacher.

4. Compliance with related policies and agreements

- 4.1 Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the Academy's other policies. If an internet post would breach any of the Academy's policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from using social media to:
- (a) breach the Academy's Information and Communications Systems Policy;
 - (b) breach the Academy's obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
 - (c) breach any obligations contained in those policies relating to confidentiality;
 - (d) breach the Academy's Disciplinary Policy or procedures;
 - (e) harass or bully other staff in any way;
 - (f) unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties;
 - (g) breach the Academy's Data Protection Policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague online); or
 - (h) breach any other laws or regulatory requirements.
- 4.2 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 Academy and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the Academy.
- 4.3 Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
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5. Data protection

- 5.1 All staff are bound by a duty of confidentiality in relation to information obtained during the course of their employment. Biddulph High School is committed to protecting the confidentiality of information covered by the Data Protection Act 1998. This will include (but is not limited to):
- (a) Student information/data;
 - (b) Staff records; and
 - (c) Commercially sensitive information relating to the Academy.
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6. Personal use of social media

- 6.1 Personal use of social media is never permitted during working hours or by means of the Academy's computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. If you are using Social Media during your lunch break it must be off site.
- 6.2 Staff should at all times keep their personal use of social media separate from their professional use of social media (where use of social media on behalf of the Academy is permitted under this policy).
- 6.3 When using any personal social media sites, staff must not:

- (a) identify themselves as employees of the Academy;
- (b) contact students from the Academy or any other school (unless the student is a family member and the member of staff does not pass on any confidential information gained during the course of their employment to that family member);
- (c) contact members of a student's family;
- (d) accept a friend request from a current student, an ex-student under age 21 or a member of a student/ex-student's family; If an ex student is over 21 and has a sibling in school then staff should NOT accept a friend request
- (e) post any details or information obtained during the course of their employment with the Academy;
- (f) post any photographs, videos or any other type of image of students, in particular students wearing their Academy uniform;
- (g) post any photographs, videos or other type of image of other staff members wearing clothing that could be associated with the Academy;
- (h) post any photographs, videos or any other type of image of the building or premises
- (i) post the contact details of the Academy on any personal social media papers;
- (j) link any official contact details or Academy email addresses to their personal online social media accounts or use these addresses to communicate;
- (k) use part copies of any logos or brands linked to the Academy;
- (l) put themselves in a situation where there is conflict between their personal interests and the interests of the Academy and
- (m) post anything on their personal social media sites which could bring the Academy into disrepute.

6.4 Staff must report any communications received from students, ex-students or family members of students on their personal social media site to the Headteacher.

6.5 Staff must not edit online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia in a personal capacity whilst at work using IT equipment owned by the Academy

7. Prohibited use

7.1 Staff must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the Academy's interests or reputation, even indirectly.

7.2 Staff must not use social media to defame or disparage the Academy, its 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 or publish any content which may result in a claim for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or any other claim(s) for damages.

- 7.3 Staff must not express opinions on the Academy's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Headteacher. Staff may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.
- 7.4 Staff must not post comments about sensitive topics, such as the Academy's performance, or do anything to jeopardise its confidential information or intellectual property on any social media sites.
- 7.5 Staff must report any misuse of social media to the Headteacher.
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8. Use of social media on behalf of Biddulph High School

- 8.1 Any use of social media on behalf of the Academy must be approved by the Headteacher. Staff may be required to undergo training before they use social media on behalf of the Academy or certain requirements and restrictions may be imposed with regard to the use of social media.
- 8.2 Staff must not create social media accounts including Twitter on behalf of the Academy without obtaining prior approval to do so from the Headteacher.
- 8.3 Any use of social media on behalf of the Academy must be in accordance with the rules and regulations of the social media service provider, particularly with regards to minimum age requirements.
- 8.4 Staff members must act in the best interests of the Academy, its staff and its students when using social media and must not post anything online which could be interpreted as being discriminatory, derogatory, defamatory or abusive, or would otherwise cause the reputation of the Academy to be damaged. A disclaimer must be added to the account stating "All Views are My Own."
- 8.5 Any communications on behalf of the Academy using social media must be made from an official social media account.
- 8.6 If a member of staff is contacted for comments about the Academy for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, they must direct the enquiry to the Headteacher and must not respond without written approval.
- 8.7 Staff must not represent their personal views as those of the Academy when using social media on behalf of the Academy.
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9. Guidelines for responsible use of social media

- 9.1 Staff should:
- (a) keep all personal log-in information and passwords confidential. Staff are advised not to disclose personal contact information on any social media site;
 - (b) set their privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media sites; and

- (c) be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that they are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.

- 9.2 If a member of staff discloses their affiliation with the Academy on their profile or in any social media postings, they must state that their views do not represent those of the Academy (unless they are authorised to speak on behalf of the Academy as set out in paragraph 7.3) e.g. All Views Are My Own.
 - 9.3 Staff should also ensure that their profile and any content they post is consistent with the professional image they present to students and colleagues.
 - 9.4 If a member of staff is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they must refrain from posting it until they have discussed it with the Headteacher.
 - 9.5 If a member of staff sees social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Academy, they should contact the Headteacher.
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10. Monitoring

- 10.1 The Academy reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using its IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that its rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and staff consent to such monitoring by their use of such resources and systems.
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11. Recruitment

Biddulph High School reserves the right to use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where it does this, the Academy will act in accordance with its data protection and equal opportunities obligations.

12. Breach of this policy

- 12.1 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 Academy's investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.
- 12.2 Staff may be required to remove any social media content that the Academy considers to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.
- 12.3 Any providers contracted by the Academy must inform the Headteacher immediately if a breach of this policy comes to light so that appropriate action can be taken to limit any reputational damage to Biddulph High School and to protect any confidential information. If further action is necessary in

relation to these breaches, it should be taken in accordance with the provider’s disciplinary procedure.

REVIEWED : JANUARY 2019

REVIEW DATE : JANUARY 2021

Mrs E Robinson, Chair of Trustees :

Date :

Mr S P Ascroft, Headteacher :

Date :

“Working together to achieve our personal best”