

Social Media Policy



BRADGATE Education Partnership

Approved: 18/03/20 – Trust Board Meeting
Review Date: March 2022
Responsible Officer: HR Manager

Trust Mission Statement

Our mission is to create high quality educational opportunities for all children and young people across the partnership by developing a strong collaborative and co-operative model through which we encourage autonomy, share best practice, enhance the professional aspirations of our staff and ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The Trust is committed to working in close partnership with all members of the community and places great value on the role which parents and carers can play in supporting children's learning and the development of the schools within the Trust.
- 1.2** The Trust are aware that social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely used and enables people to communicate in ways that can be widely shared and accessible, therefore it is important for the Trust to outline its approach to safe and positive use of social media with the community, parents and carers.
- 1.3** The Trust wish to avoid parents/carers inappropriately using social media as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and its employees.

2.0 Scope & Principles

- 2.1** This policy applies mainly to parents/carers who may use social media inappropriately but may extend to any stakeholder who are using social media to express negative or offensive views.
- 2.2** The Trust has a duty of care to safeguard students and children within its care, this also includes staff and anyone associated with the school, negative effects of social networking sites will be taken seriously and this policy is in place to avoid such circumstances.
- 2.3** This policy also aims to safeguard the reputation of the Trust and the schools within it from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites. The Trust clarifies through this policy what is considered to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents/carers.

3.0 Appropriate Use of Social Media from Parents/Carers

- 3.1** Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of students and enable parents to access information about the work of the Trust and schools. It also has positive benefits with regards to communication with parents/carers.
- 3.2 Considerations Before Posting**

The Trust recognises that most parents/carers have their own personal social media accounts and therefore as a guide the Trust has provided the following information for parents/carers to consider when posting on social media:

 - 3.2.1** It is important to consider whether the social networking site is the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express views. The Trust and the schools within it would ask that if parent/carers have concerns then they contact the school concerned directly to discuss and provide the school opportunity to resolve matters in a timely fashion.
 - 3.2.2** The confidential nature of issues and concerns should be considered before posting on social media particularly in relation to safeguarding children/students involved. Parents/carers should consider whether a private and confidential discussion directly with the school in question would be more appropriate.
 - 3.2.3** Parents/carers should be aware that social media/internet sites should not be used to name individuals including Head Teachers and should not be used to make abusive comments about the Trust, its schools and employees within it.
 - 3.2.4** It is important for parents/carers to be aware that inappropriate, negative and abusive comments are likely to cause emotional and/or reputational harm to the Trust, schools and its employees. The Trust would consider these types of posts unjustified, particularly if the school has not yet had chance to investigate a complaint.

3.2.5 Parents must consider the reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the Trust and the schools within it, parents/carers must be aware of detrimental harm that the school may suffer as a result of the posting and the impact that such a posting may have on students' learning. They must also consider the wider impact of such negative use of social media on other parents/carers and children/students of the school.

3.3 Zero Tolerance Approach

It is rarely appropriate to use social media in a way that is negative towards to the Trust, schools within it and its employees. Parents must use the Trust's Complaints Policy in all instances to resolve matters in the interests of students and children.

3.4 The Trust takes a zero tolerance approach to inappropriate uses of social networking sites and the following list provides examples of such use:

3.4.1 Making allegations about employees or students at the Trust and schools within it

3.4.2 Making complaints about the Trust, schools within it and its employees

3.4.3 Making defamatory statements

3.4.4 Publishing abusive comments

3.4.5 Posting negative/offensive comments

3.4.6 Posting racist/homophobic comments

3.4.7 Posting comments which threaten violence

3.5 Parents/carers should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. Schools within the Trust will work with students/children on appropriate use of social media, but it is expected that parents/carers also explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

4.0 Action by the Trust

4.1 Informal Action

The Trust will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents/carers in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the Trust/school will usually discuss the matter with the parent/carer to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the comments/posts be removed from the social networking site in question.

4.2 Formal Action

If the parent refuses to remove comments/posts and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the Trust/school considers inappropriate, the School will consider taking the following action:

4.2.1 If the inappropriate comments have been made on a Trust or school social media account or website, the parent/carer may be blocked or restricted.

4.2.2 The Trust/school will also contact the host/provider of the social networking sites/websites to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information.

4.2.3 The Trust/school will set out the concerns in writing to the parent/carer, providing a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed.

4.2.4 The Trust will seek legal advice where appropriate and implement subsequent legal action.

4.2.5 Contact the Police where the Trust/school feels it appropriate.