

Connect Academy Trust

Social Media Policy



September 2016

For Review and Approval by the Board of Connect Academy Trust,
October 2016

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Social Media

1. Key Principles

All individuals of the Connect Academy Trust including Staff, Pupils, Parents Governors, Volunteers external services providers and friends should ensure they conduct themselves, at all times, in such a way that serves to protect the reputation of the Trust, and treat colleagues, pupils and others associated with the Trust with professionalism and respect.

It is important to protect all individuals from being the subject of inappropriate statements and comments placed on social networking sites. This could include statements referring to confidential issues, making false or vexatious allegations, derogatory, insulting or offensive remarks and threats or intimidating comments. The posting of such comments will be viewed as a potential breach of policy and appropriate action taken. Where such actions are committed by employees of the Trust it may be viewed as misconduct or gross misconduct and steps may be taken in accordance with the agreed Disciplinary Policy.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that all individuals consider this and act responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the Trust either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking sites.

This policy relates to the use of social networking outside working hours. It should also be noted that other than in exceptional circumstances and where the prior approval of the CEO has been given, the accessing of social networking sites during working hours either on personal or school equipment is not permitted.

2. Aims

To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all individuals in the Trust including, Staff, Pupils, Parents, Governors, Volunteers, external service providers and friends within the Trust with respect to social networking.

To support the Board of Directors overriding commitment to safeguard and protect children, staff and other individuals at the Trust.

3. Code of Conduct

The following are **not considered acceptable** within the Connect Academy Trust:

The use of the Trust's name, logo, or any other published material without prior written or verbal permission from the CEO. This applies to any published material including both electronic and paper communications.

The posting of any communication or images which links the Trust to any form of illegal activity or any other action which may damage its reputation. This includes defamatory comments.

The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the Trust.

The unauthorised posting of any images of employees, children, Governors or anyone directly connected with the Trust whilst engaged in Trust activities.

Making derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the Trust, or anyone at or connected with the Trust.

In addition to the above requirements, individuals are advised to use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, nor the Trust's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.

Individuals should also be aware of risks associated with on-line identity fraud and be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

Individuals should remain vigilant regarding radicalisation and extremism online, ensuring close monitoring of pupils in their care and colleagues they work with. It is each person's responsibility to report any concerns or suspicious activity to the Computing Lead or Safeguarding Team.

4. Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct

In instances where there has been a breach of the terms of this policy by an employee of the Trust, the following will apply:

Any breaches of this policy by an employee of the Trust will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. Depending on the circumstances a breach of this policy may be viewed as misconduct which could result in disciplinary action being taken or gross misconduct which may result in summary dismissal.

Any breach of this policy by an individual linked to the Trust, who is not an employee of the Trust, the Board of Directors will take appropriate action in order to protect the Trust's reputation and that of its Staff, Parents, Governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the Trust.

Signed
Chief Executive Officer

Date

Signed
Chair of Connect Academy Trust

Date