



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Approved by the Governing Board on 6.10.25

This policy will be reviewed biennially (or sooner if required).

Version 1.0

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If this document has been printed, please note that it may not be the most up-to-date version. For the current version please contact the Clerk to the Governors

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines the framework governing the use of social media within the Two Rivers Federation. The policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media for the benefit of federation staff, parents, carers and pupils and it addresses risks associated with the use of social media, including issues of safeguarding, bullying and reputation.

2. Definition

2.1 The term social media is commonly applied to web-based tools that enable users to interact with one other online, sharing interests, information and opinions via the posting of content to other members of the same virtual community. Some of the best-known examples are Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

2.2 Wherever the term “individuals” is used in this policy, it should be read to include all the entities mentioned in paragraph 3.3 below.

3. Scope

3.1 Professional communications

All professional communications made via a school's official social media account fall within the scope of this policy.

3.2 Personal communications

Personal communications made via a personal social media account and which are likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the reputation of either of the schools within the Two Rivers Federation also fall within the scope of this policy.

Where a personal account is used which associates itself with one or more of the schools within the Two Rivers Federation or where a message being posted impacts on a school within the Two Rivers Federation, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school or the federation by the inclusion of an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications fall within the scope of this policy. However, personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the schools within the Two Rivers Federation are outside the scope of this policy.

3.3 To whom the policy applies

This policy applies to all Two Rivers Federation employees (as well as agency workers / temporary staff) together with all governors and volunteers acting on behalf of the federation.

4. Associated policies and procedures

4.1 There are a number of other federation policies which govern employee behaviour and the disclosure of information. Therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction with the following additional federation policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy including: use of mobile phones, images and social media
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality Policy
- E-Safety Policy + E-safety Acceptable Use Policy Guidance

- Information Security Policy
- Information Security Incident Management Policy & Procedure.

5. Organisational control

5.1 Process for account creation

A school's community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a "Friends of the School" Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present their case to the School Leadership Team, explaining:

- the purpose of the account
- the anticipated audience
- who will run and oversee the account (naming at least two members of staff)
- whether the account will be open or private/closed
- how the account will be promoted.

After appropriate consideration, the SLT will be either approve or reject the application. In all instances, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone intending to run a social media account associated with the Two Rivers Federation has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This requirement also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the schools within the Two Rivers Federation, including volunteers or parents.

6. Roles & responsibilities

The following responsibilities are allocated as follows:

6.1 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- development and implementation of this social media policy
- processing of applications for the creation of new social media accounts
- facilitation of training on use of social media
- investigation of any reported incidents (including an initial assessment, assignment of appropriate staff and the involvement of external agencies as appropriate).

6.2 Administrator / Moderator

- creation of new accounts following SLT approval
- secure storage of account details, including passwords
- contributing content to the social media accounts
- involvement in the monitoring of social media accounts
- making arrangements for the management of the school's social media accounts prior to leaving the federation.

6.2 All federation staff

- complete appropriate training on the use of social media
- use of social media accounts in accordance with this and other relevant policies
- regularly monitor, update & manage content they have posted on school social media accounts
- add an appropriate disclaimer to personal social media posts if these identify the Two Rivers Federation or one of its schools.

7. Content creation

7.1 The federation expects its staff and volunteers to act responsibly, exercising sound judgement and common sense. Individuals should be mindful that content they post online, whether at work or at home, has the potential to affect the reputation of the federation. Individuals should not make any derogatory, untrue or discriminating comments about the school, its pupils or fellow employees. Neither should any comments be made that are likely to adversely affect the reputation of the federation or any of its schools.

7.2 Responsibility not to adversely affect the federation's reputation extends to when social media is used outside of normal working hours. Content posted on an individual's personal social media account is deemed to be their responsibility. Therefore, it is important that individuals ensure that their security settings on all social media sites to which they contribute are set appropriately so that the individual's accounts can only be accessed and used by those approved by that individual.

7.3 Individuals should recognise that, online, their personal and working lives are likely to overlap. Therefore, when creating online content, it is important to bear in mind that, whilst information, comments and images posted online might be intended to only be shared with friends and family, these might be forwarded on and this may result in them unintentionally being viewed by parents, colleagues and pupils, as well as members of the wider community.

7.4 It is important that individuals maintain an appropriate level of professionalism when contributing to social media. Individuals should remain aware of their language and conduct whilst using these sites and should consider content carefully prior to it being posted. Confidential and/or sensitive information to which an individual has become privy as a result of their role within the federation must not be disclosed on social media. Staff must also ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.

8. Copyright

8.1 Individuals should consider the copyright of any content they intend sharing and, where necessary, seek permission from the copyright holder before the content is shared. The copyright holder should receive appropriate acknowledgement.

9. Use of images

9.1 Consent to use any photographs or video recordings should be sought in line with the current requirements of data protection legislation. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed for the purpose of creating social media content then their wishes should always be respected.

9.2 Staff should not share or upload pupil pictures via their personal social media accounts.

9.3 Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Pupils should always be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.

9.4 If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

10. Parents / Carers

10.1 If parents / carers are allowed access to post comments via school social media, they should be informed about acceptable use.

11. Monitoring

11.1 School social media accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts should be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on an account. Any such instances must be reported to the SLT and appropriate action taken without delay.

11.2 As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public social media postings relating to any of the schools within the Two Rivers Federation so that any concerns can be promptly identified.

12. Inappropriate or unacceptable conduct

12.1 Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. posting defamatory, discriminatory, offensive or harassing content or breaching confidentiality) is taken extremely seriously and should be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff who will then follow the appropriate procedure. This may involve formal action taken under the federation's Code of Conduct Policy. Very occasionally, inappropriate communications may need to be referred to the police for investigation.

12.2 It is essential that appropriate boundaries are maintained between individuals and pupils. Individuals should avoid accepting pupils as 'friends' on social media sites. If an individual has a specific reason for needing to communicate with a pupil via social media they should first discuss this with the Business Support Manager and/or the Executive Headteacher.

12.3 If an individual participates in a public online forum as part of their role within the federation they should specify their job title and ensure that their line manager is notified of the discussion.

12.4 When an individual participates in a public online forum as a private individual they should make this clear and not use their work e-mail address.

12.5 Official school social media accounts belonging to schools within the Two Rivers Federation must not be used for personal gain.

13. Negative or abusive online comments

13.1 Individuals should not respond to negative or disparaging comments about the school or about individuals that have been posted online possibly with the intention to generate negative

conversations. They should instead bring the content to the attention of the Business Support Manager and/or the Executive Headteacher.

13.2 Any such exchanges over school social media should be removed and the person posting should be blocked from posting further comments. The person who posted the comments should be invited to attend the school to discuss the issues in person.

13.3 If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through the use of a school's social media account, this should be reported to the Business Support Manager and/or the Executive Headteacher.

14. The permanent nature of information published online

14.1 Content posted online is likely to form part of a permanent record as, even if it is later removed, it may have already been disseminated worldwide via social media and so is virtually impossible to retract once it has been published.

14.2 The publication of untrue, defamatory statements can render someone posting such statements liable to an action for libel or slander.

15. Using social media at work

15.1 The use of federation-owned laptops, computers or other electronic devices to access social media sites for personal use is permitted so long as such use is restricted to lunch breaks and that usage is reasonable and appropriate.

16. Summary for individuals

16.1 *Individuals should:*

- maintain an awareness of their association with the federation when posting on social media and ensure that content is consistent with professional expectations
- remain aware of issues such as libel and slander
- inform senior management if they will be participating online in a professional capacity
- inform senior management immediately if anything has been posted, inadvertently or otherwise, that may cause issues for other individuals and/or the school
- check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- consider the appropriateness of content for any potential audience of the school's social media accounts
- use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- make it clear if they are not posting in a professional capacity
- always use an appropriate and professional tone
- be respectful to all parties
- express opinions in a balanced and measured manner
- think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, seek a second opinion
- consider turning off tagging people in images where possible.

16.2 *Individuals should not:*

- make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute

- share confidential or sensitive information
- breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- use social media to air internal grievances.

17. Policy History

17.1 This policy is maintained by the Data Protection Officer and will be reviewed on a biennial basis (or sooner if required). For help in interpreting this policy, please contact:

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Policy Date	Summary of Change	Contact	Implementation Date
09/05/2025	New policy created	Alvin Scott (DPO)	