BOHUNT EDUCATION TRUST SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Contents

1. Policy statement and principles

1.1 Policy aims and principles

The internet provides a range of social media tools, forums and publicly editable content; including networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook, blogging sites such as Tumblr and Wordpress, image or video sharing sites such as Instagram and YouTube and editable content such as Wikipedia.

It is important that we are able to sue these media flexibly and effectively but this needs to be balanced with our duty to Bohunt Education Trust (BET) and *[insert school name]* and their reputation, the community and our legal responsibilities. This policy sets out the principles that *[insert school name]* staff are expected to follow when using social media.

The policy is in place to ensure that social media is used responsibly to:

- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff, governors and BET is protected
- Safeguard all children
- Ensure that any users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the scool

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, not excluding dismissal.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to the school's governing body, all teaching and other staff, whether employed directly by the school or by BET, trainee teachers and other trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or

provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: blogs, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, 'microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites. It is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and freedom of information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's equalities, child protection and ICT acceptable use policies.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school.

1.3 Legal framework

This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by BET / the school and is written in line with current legislation and guidance. All school staff and individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by confidentiality guidelines and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Releasing confidential information to the media or online could breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- The Common Law duty of Confidentiality
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- The Human Rights Act 1998

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, e.g. student and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998.
- School business records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information.
- Information you received in the expectation of confidentiality.
- Anything commercially sensitive such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations.
- Politically sensitive information.

1.4 Complaints

All complaints are dealt with under the **BET Complaints Policy**. *[You may wish to state where this policy can be found and how it can be accessed].*

Complaints about BET should be made in writing and will follow the BET complaint procedures and set timescales. The handling of complaints may be delegated to an appropriate person.

The outcome of the complaint will be communicated in writing.

1.5 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed *[insert time period]* or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and / or government guidance
- as a result of any other significant change or event
- in the event that the policy is determined not to be effective

If there are urgent concerns these should be raised to the *[insert responsible person]* in the first instance for them to determine whether a review of the policy is required in advance of the review date.

2. Roles and responsibilities
2.1 Key personnel

Insert title		
Contact details	Email	
	Tel	
Insert title (delete if not necessary)		
Contact details	Email	
	Tel	
Insert title (delete if not necessary)		
Contact details	Email	
	Tel	
Insert title (delete if not necessary)		
Contact details	Email	
	Tel	

Insert the key responsibilities for the roles listed (for people with overall responsibility for social media within the school) and any other roles that may be relevant – such as the responsibilities of BET, the school and the headteacher/SLT.

3. Social media in personal use

Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any student, whether from *[insert school name]* or any other school, unless the students are family members.

If staff members wish to communicate with students through social media sites or to enable students to keep in touch with one another, they can only do so with the approval of the school senior leadership team (SLT).

Staff members must decline or ignore 'friend requests' from students they receive in their personal social media accounts. Instead, if they receive such requests from students who are not family members, they must discuss these in general terms in class and signpost students to become 'friends' of the official school site.

Any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

Staff members must not have any contact with students' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

On leaving *[insert school name]*'s service, staff members must not contact *[insert school name]* students by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact students from their former school/s by means of personal social media.

Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues, BET staff and other parties and school or BET corporate information must not be discussed on their personal webspace.

Photographs, videos or any other types of image of students and their families or images depicting staff members wearing school uniforms or clothing with school or BET logos must not be used.

School or BET email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopedias such as *Wikipedia* in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the school's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the school itself.

[Insert school name], BET, service or team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal webspace.

If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported to the designated senior person for child protection as detailed in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**. *[You may wish to state where this policy can be found and how it can be accessed]*.

Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.

Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the principal.

Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any personal social media accounts.

Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.

Staff should not accept any current student of any age or any ex-student of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

In the event of an expression of interest whereby staff would like to contact sixth form students who have left Bohunt Sixth Form about their current employment or progression experience, contact may be made by staff through an official school email, phone or social media account to students' work email or telephone. Staff should not use personal phones or social media accounts to contact ex-students regarding school matters.

4. Using social media on behalf of the school

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum. Some of which support student learning, including the official school Twitter account *[insert address]* and Facebook account *[insert address]* and there are some courses that require the use of blogs for assessment. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:
- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school email account.
- The url and identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate Head of Faculty or member of the SLT before access is permitted for students.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school and on BET.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents (either for specific use in that instance, or via a blanket consent form which covers this usage), identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites are appropriate and safe.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.

Review frequency: 3 years
Review date: March 2020
Last updated: March 2017