



**ST TERESA
of CALCUTTA**
Catholic Academy Trust

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy Control Sheet			
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4	Policy Author	Head of Innovation	
5	Accountable SLG member	CIO	
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Summary of Changes			
Date	Version	Action	Summary of Changes
October 2022	1.0	New Policy	
February 2026	1.1	Reformatted	

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1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The widespread availability and use of social media applications brings opportunities to communicate in new and innovative ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our Trust schools, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children and young people. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of the Trust.

2.0 Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to:
- Protect the Trust from legal risks.
 - Ensure that the reputation of the Trust, its staff and governors is protected.
 - Safeguard all children.
 - Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the Trust.
- 2.2 Definitions and Scope Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:
- Blogs.
 - Online discussion forums.
 - Collaborative spaces.
 - Media sharing services.
 - 'Microblogging' applications.
 - Online gaming environments.
- 2.3 Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, and comment streams on public websites such as a newspaper site.
- 2.4 Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence. 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 as well as other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Trust's Equalities, Safeguarding & IT Acceptable Use Policies. Within this policy there is a distinction between the use of trust-approved social media for educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

3.0 Staff Personal Use of Social Media

- 3.1 Trust staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents/carers or children from Trust school communities in any personal social media whilst in employment at the Trust.
- 3.2 Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 3.3 If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child on any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.

- 3.4 Members of staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- 3.5 All email communication between staff and members of the Trust's school communities on Trust business must be made from an official Trust email account.
- 3.6 Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the Trust and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- 3.7 Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the Trust in any posts or comments related to the Trust on any social media accounts. Any posts or comments that bring the Trust's name into disrepute could result in disciplinary action.
- 3.8 Staff should not accept any current student of any age or any ex-student of the Trust under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

4.0 Trust Approved Use of Social Media

- 4.1 All schools are encouraged to maintain a regular social media presence with a view to keeping family members and communities up to date on school developments and important news. 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 Trust email account. Trust social media accounts must only be set up further to approval by SLT.
 - The identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate member of SLT before access is permitted for students.
 - The content of any Trust-approved social media site should be solely professional.
 - Staff must not publish photographs of children without the consent of parents/carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on Trust social media accounts.
 - Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
 - Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of Trust-approved 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.
- 4.2 Where possible, social media handles will be in the format @schoolname, in lowercase.
- 4.3 All schools will post at least 3 times per week, showcasing the work that is going on in their schools.
- 4.4 All schools will use social media to promote opening evenings, parents' evenings, parish events and keep communities up to date on school developments and important news.
- 4.5 The SLT within each school will be responsible for quality assuring the content posted on their social media platforms and ensuring it does not bring the school or the Trust into disrepute.

5.0 Pupil Use of Social Media

- 5.1 Pupils will not access social media whilst at school. Pupils are not permitted to use the school's Wi-Fi network to access any social media platforms.
- 5.2 Pupils will not attempt to 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Pupils are only permitted to be affiliates of school social media accounts. Where a pupil or parent attempts to "friend" or 'follow' a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the headteacher.

- 5.3 Pupils will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils. Pupils will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- 5.4 Pupils are instructed not to sign up to any social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil's age.
- 5.5 If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, it will be reported to a teacher.
- 5.6 Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to school-based sanctions.

6.0 Glossary of Terms

- 6.1 The following definitions are crucial to understanding our Social Media Policy. This list is not exhaustive.

Social media means any type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. Social media includes but is not limited to, online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn and also covers blogs, chat rooms, forums, podcasts and video image-sharing websites such as YouTube, Flickr, Reddit, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Pinterest and Tumblr.

Staff/adults working in school means all members of staff and those who work on a self-employed basis. It also includes trainee teachers, other trainees and apprentices, volunteers, agency staff, external consultants and school governors/trustees.

Information means all types of information including but not limited to, facts, data, comments, audio, video, photographs, images, texts, e-mails, instant messages and any other form of online interaction.

Inappropriate information means information as defined above which any reasonable person would consider to be unsuitable or that brings into question the professional integrity of the adult, given their position within the school.

Trust school communities mean the school, its pupils, all adults working in school (as defined above) parents/carers of pupils, former pupils, the Local Authority, the Diocese and any other person or body directly or indirectly connected with the school.