



# MacIntyre Academies

## Social Media Policy

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V2	The Policy has had an extensive review with changes throughout.	Group Director	Apr 2022

Person Responsible: Group Director  
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## Social Media Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy sets out the required standards for employees to observe when using social media including the circumstances in which social media usage may be monitored and action which may be taken in respect of any breaches of this policy.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees in permanent, fixed-term or temporary posts as well as LAB Members, the Trust Board and volunteers at MacIntyre Academies Trust (MAT).

This policy applies to the use of social media both during working hours and otherwise, and applies regardless of whether social media is accessed using MAT IT facilities and equipment or personal equipment belonging to members of staff.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and may be amended from time to time.

### 3. Schedule of Responsibilities

The Group Director of MacIntyre Academies Trust takes overall responsibility for the implementation of policies and procedures and to provide reports as appropriate to Trustees in relation to this policy.

Principals of MacIntyre Academies and their Senior Leadership Teams will take active steps to promote good practice under this policy and review and monitor the management and implementation of this policy and practice in their Academy. They will identify training needs, ensuring competence in those staff who are responsible for and involved in the operation of this policy and associated guidance.

Teachers and other supervisory roles will, where required, monitor usage of social media and where relevant, lead on action which may be taken in respect of any breaches of this policy, undertake relevant training in relation to this policy and ensure effective and competent operation of this policy.

All employees are required to cooperate fully and positively with the requirements of the Social Media Policy and to undertake any training recommended by their line manager. Employees are responsible for their own compliance within this policy and for ensuring that they take the time to read and understand it. All employees, governors and volunteers must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate and ensure that the confidentiality of pupils/students, parents/carers, other staff and the reputation of MAT are safeguarded.

Those working with children have a duty of care and are therefore expected to adopt high standards of behaviour to retain the confidence and respect of colleagues, pupils/students both within and outside of school. They should maintain appropriate boundaries and manage personal information effectively so that it cannot be misused by third parties for example cyber-bullying or identity theft.

Employees should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may also apply to information posted on social media.

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of MacIntyre Academies' policies. When using social media, employees should also have regard to policies relating to:

- Health and Safety
- Confidentiality
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- E Safety
- Data Protection (including acceptable use of IT) and MAT Privacy Notices
- Disciplinary
- Behaviour (Code of Conduct)
- Equality Legislation
- Obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies
- Requirements to comply with laws and regulatory requirements

MacIntyre Academies' Human Resources are responsible for providing advice and training under this policy and reviewing and updating the policy as required; ensuring continuing relevance and effectiveness in line with any developments in employment legislation, good employment practice and other MacIntyre Academies policies. The HR Team is responsible for collating data for regular Trust Board HR reports and where appropriate, providing confidential reports as required by the Group Director and MacIntyre Academies Trust Board on individual cases.

#### **4. Introduction**

MacIntyre Academies recognises the importance that utilising a range of communication channels has in ensuring effective communication with our stakeholders. Engaging with social media usage can generate a number of benefits and acknowledges that the organisation and its employees may regularly make use of social media including but not limited to:

- **Social networking** e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, google+, youtube
- **Messaging / discussion channels** e.g Whatsapp, Class Dojo, forums, online reviews, message boards, chatrooms and instant messenger
- **Information sources** e.g. Wikipedia, blogs, wikis, podcasts, commenting on web-articles
- **Online entertainment** e.g. online gaming, apps, video/ photo sharing sites

As technology advances and social media continues to evolve, it's impossible to cover all circumstances of emerging media, but the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium used.

This policy is intended to help employees make appropriate decisions about the use of such social media. Where the wording in the policy is 'must' or 'must not' this is mandatory and failure to comply with this will be considered a breach of the policy (outlined in section 7). Where the wording in the policy is 'should' or 'should not' this is advisory guidance and is considered best practice (outlined in section 8). Any employees who are not sure what any aspect of the policy is referring to should speak to their line manager or the HR Team for clarification.

Breach of this policy may be dealt with under the disciplinary policy and procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct.

## 5. Using Social Media on behalf of the MacIntyre Academies Trust Name

Only staff with direct responsibility within their role for updating social media, such as for advertising recruitment vacancies, sharing school news, notices, as a point of contact etc. are permitted to post material on a social media website on behalf of MacIntyre Academies. Where staff members are unsure whether this is contained within their role, they should refer to their job description and/or the Principal. Any breach of this restriction will amount to gross misconduct.

If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:

- a) Always be professional and aware they are an ambassador for the setting.
- b) Disclose their official role or position but make it clear that they do not necessarily speak on behalf of the setting.
- c) Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
- d) Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including: libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws.
- e) Ensure that they have appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel.
- f) Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the setting, unless they are authorised to do so.
- g) Inform their line manager, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or Deputy DSL or Principal of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from pupils.
- h) Ensure that permission from the child's parent has been sought before information is used on social media.
- i) Ensure that there is no identifying information relating to a child/ children and young people in the post
- j) The post must be a positive and relevant post relating to the children, the good work of staff, the Trust or any achievements.
- k) Any photos for social media posts may only be taken using Trust cameras/devices or devices that have been approved in advance. Where any device is used that does not belong to the Trust all photos must be deleted immediately from the device, once the photos have been uploaded to the Trust server.

If you are contacted for comments about the Trust for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, you must direct the inquiry to the Principal and must not respond.

## 6. Personal Use of Social Media Sites while at work

MacIntyre Academies permits the use of some social media websites whilst at work for personal use subject to certain conditions. This is a privilege and not a right and must not be abused nor overused. The Trust reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time.

The following conditions must be met for personal use of social media whilst at work. Use must:

- a) Be minimal and take place out of normal working hours, for example during breaks, and never in the presence of young people

- b) Not breach any of the rules set out in this policy
- c) Not interfere with work commitments
- d) Comply with the MAT policies listed above.

## 7. Rules for the use of Social Media

Where staff choose to use social media, both whilst in the workplace and in their personal use they must observe the following rules:

- a) Staff must not publish any content that may directly or indirectly bring MacIntyre Academies' reputation into disrepute or negatively alter the public perception of the Trust
- b) Staff must not disclose or comment on commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information
- c) Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:
  - i. *The Trust;*
  - ii. *Current, past or prospective staff*
  - iii. *Current, past or prospective pupils*
  - iv. *Parents, carers or families of (iii)*
  - v. *The Trust's suppliers and services providers; and*
  - vi. *Other affiliates and stakeholders.*
- d) Staff must avoid posting comments about organisation-related topics such as MAT performance or Academy matters.
- e) Staff must not use MAT logos or photos including individual Academy logos, slogans or other trademarks without prior written permission.
- f) Staff must not use a work email address to sign up to any personal social media account.
- g) If Staff are using social media, they should make it clear in posts that they are speaking on their own behalf and that their views do not represent those of the Trust.
- h) Staff must ensure that their profile and any content posted are consistent with the professional image they are required to present to colleagues, pupils and parents.
- i) Staff must not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- j) Staff must not use their personal accounts to contact parents/carers, family members or children/young people supported by MAT on any social media site. Direct messages from parents / carers or children /young people supported by MAT including friend requests that are received to staff member's personal social media accounts must either be declined or ask them to contact you using official channels of communication.
- k) Staff members are responsible for protecting the reputation of the Trust and are required to report any social media content they are aware of that disparages or reflects poorly on the Trust, its staff, pupils, parents, service providers or stakeholders - report this in the first instance to the Principal without unreasonable delay.
- l) Staff must comply with the terms of use of specific social media platforms
- m) Staff must not escalate heated or private discussions, emails or correspondence and should be respectful to others. Staff are reminded where they feel uneasy about something they are about to publish, to refrain from publishing this.

- n) Staff must keep in mind the impact that their pictures, videos, shares and comments will have on the general perception of MAT by association and should be aware that any complaints which are received concerning this material may lead to an investigation. This includes comments that may be considered inflammatory and divisive, such as politics and religion.

**If a member of Staff is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, he or she should refrain from making the communication until he or she has discussed it with the Principal.**

## **8. Additional Guidance**

- Any employee who feels they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website, should inform the Principal or the HR Team.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish onto social media and should be aware that any content published will remain in the public domain for years afterwards and that what they publish might be available to be read by the masses. Staff should keep this in mind before they post content.
- Staff should avoid publishing their contact details where they can be accessed by people they did not intend to see them and must never publish anyone else's contact details.
- Staff are advised to set their privacy settings to the highest security including not letting others tag you in posts or pictures, share your posts or see them publicly and limiting personal information (including surname, location and birth date).

## **9. Monitoring use of Social Media Websites**

Employees should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under MacIntyre Academies' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

MAT reserves the right to restrict access to certain social media websites. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.

## **10. Misuse of Social Media**

Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or give rise to liability against MAT and the employee in question. It may also cause embarrassment to MAT, the people we support and suppliers. In particular uploading, posting, forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a personal or professional capacity will amount to gross misconduct (this list is not exhaustive);

- a) Pornographic material (that is writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit nature).
- b) A false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation.

- c) Material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to MAT, people we support and suppliers.
- d) Confidential information about MAT, our employees or people we support (which you do not have express authority to disseminate).
- e) Any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or MAT)
- f) Material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy

## **11. Breach of Policy**

Breaching this Social Media Policy is a serious matter. Employees, who do so, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Where evidence of misuse is found, MAT will undertake detailed investigation in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. If necessary such information may be handed to the Police in connection with a criminal investigation.