



# **The Kenn & Kenton Federation**



## **POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES AND ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOLS USING AND PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL MEDIA**

**This Policy was adopted by**

**The Governing Body of Kenn and Kenton Federation  
on 25 February 2021**

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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Social media is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

This includes blogs, message boards, social networking websites (such as [Facebook](#), [google+](#), [Twitter](#), [bebo](#), [MySpace](#)), content sharing websites (such as [flickr](#), [YouTube](#)) and many other similar online channels.

This policy applies to all employees within schools where this policy has been adopted. It also applies to all governors and volunteers undertaking work on behalf of the organisation. Schools should ensure contractors and agency workers are also aware of this policy. These groups will be collectively referred to as 'individuals' within this policy.

All individuals' should be aware of their own conduct and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour in relation to their individual use of social media sites.

## **B. PRINCIPLES AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **B.1. Other related policies**

There are other policies, including those listed below which govern employee behaviour in schools with respect to the disclosure of information online, including personal activities. All individuals within schools should make sure that they are familiar with these policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Personal Information Security Policy
- Conduct Policy for Schools
- Social Media and Online Participation Policy and Guidelines
- Setting the Standards for Acceptable Behaviour Policy
- GTC Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers (for teaching staff only)
- Safer Working Practice For The Protection Of Children And Staff In Education Settings
- Acceptable Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy

### **B.2. Individuals are responsible for their own actions**

School employees are encouraged to use the ICT systems they have at their disposal to enhance their work and learning opportunities for students' learning. The school, in turn, will expect its staff and volunteers to agree to be responsible users, exercising sound judgement and common sense.

Individuals should bear in mind that anything they post online, at work and at home, can potentially affect the reputation of the school and is ultimately the responsibility of the employee.

Individuals should ensure that privacy and security settings are set and used on all devices. All passwords should conform to the [Password Policy](#), available on the Source.

### **B.3. Be aware of working and personal lives overlapping**

Online, an employee's personal and working lives are likely to overlap. Whilst the school understands that many individuals use social media sites, it is important to remember that information/comments/images posted online originally intended just for friends and family can be forwarded on and might be viewed by students, parents and colleagues as well as members of the wider community. Be aware of your language and conduct while on these sites, the rules governing staff conduct such as the Policy for Setting the Standards of Acceptable Behaviour and the Schools' Conduct Policy still apply.

#### **Individuals should not accept pupils/students as 'friends' on social media sites.**

If individuals have specific reasons for needing to communicate with students via a social media site they should first discuss this, with their reasons, with their line manager. Individuals must use their professional determination to set appropriate boundaries and if s/he is uncertain, to seek advice from the line manager **before** communicating with pupils/students.

Your conduct must not adversely affect the school's public image nor bring the school into disrepute. This requirement extends to when individuals use social media sites outside normal working hours. It is important that individuals should ensure that their security settings are set appropriately, including those on personal social media sites, so that individual's own sites can only be accessed and used by those approved by that individual. Any information displayed on individual's accounts are deemed to be their responsibility.

### **B.4. Participation in a public forum**

Participation in a public forum must be professional. Individuals should make sure they always act in an honest, accurate, fair and responsible way at all times. Be aware of language and conduct while on these sites, the rules governing staff conduct such as the Policy for Setting the Standards of Acceptable Behaviour and the Schools' Conduct Policy still apply.

When an employee participates in a public forum as part of their job they should specify their job title and ensure his/her line manager is aware of the discussion.

When an employee participates in a public forum as a private individual they must make that clear and only use their private e-mail address.

### **B.5. Consider carefully anything said/posted**

Individuals are personally responsible for their words and actions. An individual must ensure that any confidential and/or sensitive information is not posted. Individuals must not make any derogatory, untrue or discriminating comments about the school, its pupils/students or other employees. Neither should any comments be made that are likely to affect the reputation of the school.

Confidential information, including information which is available to an employee due to the nature of their job, but is not in the public domain, should not be disclosed unless specific permission has been granted to do so.

**If there is any doubt, do not post it.**

### **B.6. Do not respond to negative comments posted online**

If negative or disparaging comments about the school, its pupils/students and/or other individuals with connections to the school, are posted online or by third parties to try to spark negative conversations, individuals must not respond and should bring this to the attention of their manager.

### **B.7. Know that the Internet is permanent**

As soon as information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if it is removed or deleted later or attempts are made to make it anonymous. Information can be disseminated very quickly via social media and is virtually impossible to retract once it has been published; even if it has been online for only a short time, it may well have been picked up and copied and/or forwarded on by computers around the world.

## **C. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

The school is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way it works. However, individuals must use all forms of social media with extreme care, together with sound judgement and common sense.

Failure to adhere to this policy and those policies listed at paragraph 1 may result in formal action within the School's Conduct Policy for Employees and other appropriate action in relation to governors, volunteers, etc.

In some circumstances, inappropriate communications may result in a police investigation.

## **D. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK**

The use of school-owned laptops/computers/electronic devices to access social media sites for personal use is not permitted. The use of mobile phones will not be permitted during lessons or formal school time by staff or pupils. This excludes occasions when staff may need to use mobile phones, for example on school trips or activities off-site, or as part of a demonstration in a lesson. Staff may use their mobile phones in the staff room or outside formal school time.

Employees and volunteers must not bring bringing personal laptops/notebooks/ cameras into school. Staff need to be aware that bringing mobile phones onto the premises is at the risk of the employees and the school will not be responsible for the safekeeping of any such devices. Mobile phones may only be used in the staffroom or off of the school premises outside of lesson times. Mobile phones may only be used for phone calls and texts on the school premises – no linking in to the internet or use as cameras may be used.

Employees should note their contractual responsibility to devote their time fully to their work during paid hours. The Schools' Conduct Policy will be used to investigate any concerns regarding any employee found to be using electronic equipment for personal use during working hours, the outcome of which may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. As part of any such investigation, the school will check the employee's internet usage and will retain this information as appropriate.

All staff are required to sign the Acceptable Use of Social Media Statement attached (Appendix 1).

## E. SUMMING UP

- Be aware of your association with the school and Devon County Council in online spaces. If identified as an employee or adult associated with the school and/or Devon County Council.
- Ensure your profile is appropriate and related content is consistent with professional expectations.
- Be aware of language and professional conduct.
- Be aware of issues such as libel, defamation and slander.
- Do not breach copyright.
- Never share confidential or sensitive information.
- Inform senior management if participating online in a professional capacity.
- Individuals should alert senior management immediately if anything has been posted, inadvertently or otherwise, may cause issues for individuals and/or the school.

## AMENDMENT RECORD

Date	Reviewed By	Amendment	Approved by Governors	Date of Next Review
02.02.2021	Amanda Somerwill	Review cycle and update version October 2011. Combined Acceptable Use and Social Media Participation for Staff. Children are now covered under the E-Safety Policy.	25.02.2021	Spring 2023 or as required

## Appendix 1

### Acceptable Use of Social Media Agreement for staff

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

*The school* recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by *the school*, its staff, parents, carers and children.

#### **Scope**

**This policy is subject to the school's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.**

#### **This policy:**

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education
- *Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school*

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils/students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

**Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.**

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy. Digital communications with pupils/students are also considered. *Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.*

#### **Organisational control**

#### **Roles & Responsibilities**

##### **SLT**

- Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
- Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
- Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
- Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
- Receive completed applications for Social Media accounts
- Approve account creation

##### **ADMINISTRATOR/MODERATOR**

- Create the account following SLT approval
- Store account details, including passwords securely
- Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account

- Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)

## **STAFF**

- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Attending appropriate training
- Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

## **Process for creating new accounts**

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department Twitter account, or a “Friends of the school” Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the School Leadership Team which covers the following points:-

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

## **Monitoring**

**School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently** (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must 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 a school social media account.

## **Behaviour**

- **The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.**
- **Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy.** Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.

- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken*
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

### Legal considerations

- **Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.**
- **Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.**

### Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

### Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

### Use of images

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to:

- **Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy.** If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- **Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts**
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- Staff should not use their own mobile phone camera to take photographs of children.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

### Personal use

#### Staff

- Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

- Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.*

### **Pupil/Students**

- **Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.**
- The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
- Pupils/students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy

### **Parents/Carers**

- **If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.**
- The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

### **Monitoring posts about the school**

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.
- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

### **Managing your personal use of Social Media:**

- ["Nothing" on social media is truly private](#)
- [Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts](#)
- [Check your settings regularly and test your privacy](#)
- [Keep an eye on your digital footprint](#)
- [Keep your personal information private](#)
- [Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to](#)
- [When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post](#)
- [If you want to criticise, do it politely.](#)
- [Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?](#)
- [Know how to report a problem](#)

### **Managing school social media accounts**

#### **The Do's**

- [Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school](#)

- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

**The Don'ts**

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Signed by staff member ..... Date .....

Name .....

Position .....