SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

As part of our focus on diversity and inclusion, BDAT pledges that our policies will seek to promote equity, fairness, and respect for all staff and students. Our policies reflect the BDAT values of inclusion, compassion, aspiration, resilience, and excellence. By working closely with a range of stakeholders, such as our school, recognised Trade Union, and HR colleagues, we have ensured that BDAT's policies do not unlawfully discriminate against anybody.

1. Rationale

Social media platforms and applications bring many opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways with the academies, students, parents, external partners, and the wider community.

Before staff start using social media, it is important that staff fully understand policies and procedures in order to use these resources and services effectively and flexibly.

This policy applies to all members of staff in the Trust, including Trustees and Governors. The term 'staff' hereinafter used includes Trustees and Governors.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Safeguard all students, staff, and third parties.
- Protect the Trust from litigation or reputational damage.
- Ensure the reputation of the Trust and its staff are protected and covered at all times.
- Ensure that all staff are given all possible support to enable them to distinguish that all information shared on social media is 100% legitimate and representative of the Trust, its ethics, and practice.

This policy should be read in accordance with the Trust's Acceptable Use of IT Policy. Staff must be familiar with both policies and also with their responsibilities as set out in the policies.

2. Definitions & Scope

This policy applies to social networking sites, multimedia, and blogs for both professional and personal use. Examples include, but are not limited to, , Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, , ChatGPT, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual networks.

All 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.

Within this policy there is a distinction between the use of academy-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes and personal use of social media.

The open nature of the internet means that social networking sites can leave professionals such as teachers working with young people vulnerable if they fail to observe a few simple procedures. The guidelines below are intended to provide advice on how to avoid staff compromising their professional position. If in doubt staff should seek advice from their line manager or Headteacher/Principal.

- Staff must only use academy or Trust devices for work purposes; staff must not use academy or Trust devices for private or leisure purposes, including personal social media.
- Staff must regularly review their social media privacy settings to ensure these are set to the highest possible level.
- Staff must not accept or invite friend requests from a parent or current/former student at their academy. *This is with the exception of legitimate personal relationships created independently of work which may include family members.*
- If a member of staff receives any communication from a student on their personal social media, this must be reported to the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- If a member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any student on any social media, this must be immediately reported, as above.
- Staff must be mindful of the nature and content of any communications that they engage in on social media relating to the academy or Trust. Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the academy and the Trust in any posts or comments on any social media accounts.
- Ideally, staff should include a disclaimer on their personal social media that reads "views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the academy or Trust".
- Staff must only ever use a personal email address when using personal social media.
- In line with KCSiE September 2023 and the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Toolkit, an online search may be carried out on shortlisted candidates and will be carried out on successful candidates.
- Staff must not make disparaging remarks about their academy, Trust, or colleagues on social media. Doing this may be deemed as bullying and/or harassment.
- Staff must ensure they are not tagged in any inappropriate photos on social media. Parents and students may access staff's social media profile and could, if they find the information and/or images it contains offensive, complain to the Trust..
- Staff must ensure that any comments and/or images that they have posted or are shown in could not be deemed defamatory or in breach of copyright, privacy, fair use, and financial disclosure legislation. Academy and Trust logos or trademarks should only be posted with permission.
- Staff must ensure that any online posts do not disclose information that is confidential or proprietary to the academy or Trust.
- A second-pair-of-eyes check or some other approval must be sought when a staff member is posting from the academy or Trust's social media account.
- All email communication between staff and members of the academy community on academy business must be made from an official academy email account.
- Staff must not use personal email accounts or personal mobile phones to make contact with members of the academy community on academy business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the staff member's line manager.
- Staff must avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the academy, the Trust, and members of its community on any social media accounts.

- The Trust reserves the right to veto certain subjects, withdraw posts, and remove inappropriate comments in regard to staff's personal social media.

5.   Unsuitable and Inappropriate Activities

The Trust believes that the activities referred to in the table below would be inappropriate in an academy or central office context and that staff should not engage in these activities either in or outside of the academy when using academy equipment or systems. This list is indicative and not an exhaustive list:

Users shall not visit internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:
Images of child sexual abuse –The making, production or distribution of indecent images of children. Contrary to The Protection of Children Act 1978
Grooming, incitement, arrangement or facilitation of sexual acts against children Contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
Possession of an extreme pornographic image (grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character) Contrary to the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008
Criminally racist material in UK – to stir up religious hatred (or hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation) - contrary to the Public Order Act 1986
Pornography
Promotion of any kind of discrimination
Threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm
Betting or gambling
Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the academy or brings the academy into disrepute