



## Atlantic Centre of Excellence Multi Academy Trust

### SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

<b>Date Adopted:</b>	<b>8 September 2017</b>
<b>Date to be Reviewed:</b>	<b>Autumn Term 2020</b>

#### Introduction

The Trust recognises the vital importance that social media and social networking can play in all aspects of its uses. These online social media principles have been developed to help our employees to participate in this new frontier of marketing and communications, while respecting and representing our academies, its employees and students and what it stands for.

#### Definition of social media

For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video/image sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.

Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

#### Use of Social Media at Work

Employees, with the exception of the management group, are not allowed to access social media websites from the academy's computers or devices at any time. Each academy has specifically blocked the use of Twitter and Facebook on all of its computers, with the exception of the management group.

The Trust understands that employees may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops and palm-top and hand-held devices, to access social media websites while they are at work. Employees must limit their use of social media to their own time such as their lunch or break times.

However, as this might be visible to students, possibly inadvertently, all content viewed must adhere to the academy's strict guidelines on acceptable content.

## **Social Media in Your Personal Life**

The Trust recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of the Trust, employees must be aware that they can damage the Trust and its academies if they are recognised as being one of our employees.

Employees are allowed to say that they work for the academy or Trust, which recognises that it is natural for its staff sometimes to want to discuss their work on social media. However, the employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the academy's or Trust's name.

If employees do discuss their work on social media, they must include on their profile a statement along the following lines:

"The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer"

Any communications that employees make in a personal capacity through social media must not:

- bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by:
  - criticising or arguing with stakeholders, colleagues or rivals
  - making defamatory comments about individuals or other schools or groups; or
  - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content
- breach confidentiality, for example by:
  - revealing confidential information owned by the academy or Trust
  - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or customer contact); or
  - discussing the academy's or Trust's internal workings or its future plans that have not been communicated to the public
- breach copyright, for example by:
  - using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
  - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something;

or

- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
  - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age
  - using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the organisation); or posting images that are discriminatory or offensive (or links to such content).

## **Privacy**

For your own benefit, to ensure that your Facebook or other social media account does not compromise your professional position, ensure that your privacy settings are set and checked regularly. It is important to stay abreast of changes and updates social media sites make. Do not under any circumstances accept friend requests from a person you believe to be either a parent (unless known personally to you), a past or present pupil at your academy under the age of 18 or any child under 13.

When using a machine that is shared, always make sure that you log out of social media accounts after using it. Your account can be hijacked by others if you remain logged in – even if you quit your browser and/or switch the machine off.

Future employers may scour websites looking for information before a job interview. Take care to remove any content you would not want them to see.

Other users could post a photo on their profile in which you are named, so think about any photos in which you appear. On Facebook, you can 'untag' yourself from a photo. If you do find inappropriate references to you and/or images of you posted by a 'friend' online, you should contact them and the site to have the material removed.

If you have any concerns about information on your social networking site or if you are the victim of cyberbullying, you should inform the academy and social networking site at once.

Be aware of what monitoring, if any, may be carried out. Full details of this are detailed in the e-safety policy.

### **Use of Social Media in the Recruitment Process**

Unless it is in relation to finding candidates (for example, if an individual has put his/her details on social media websites for the purpose of attracting prospective employers), the HR department and managers will not, either themselves or through a third party, conduct searches on applicants on social media.

This is because conducting these searches during the selection process might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics (for example, sexual orientation or religious beliefs) played a part in a recruitment decision.

This is in line with the organisation's equal opportunities policy.

### **Disciplinary Action over Social Media Use**

All employees are required to adhere to this policy.

Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the organisation, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.