

Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

This social media policy relates to professional communications made through official channels, posted on the Pendle Education Trust (PET) or PET school's official social media accounts or websites. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Staff members with personal social media accounts, even those set up in a professional capacity, are outside of the scope of this policy. Such accounts are in the scope of the Pendle Education Trust Staff Acceptable Use Agreement and Pendle Education Trust Staff Code of Conduct and each PET school's individual Child Protection and Safeguarding and Online Safety policies.

The official use of social media channels only takes place with clear educational or community engagement objectives, with specific intended outcomes.

Account information and login details are held by at least one member of the Pendle Education Trust core team and at least member of each school's SLT.

The email addresses used to register and manage these social media channels must be dedicated to the management of social media and accessible to more than one member of PET and school staff.

Official social media channels have enhanced security settings, including 2-factor authentication to log in (where available).

Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies and procedures, including: Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, Online Safety policy, PET Technical Security policy and PET GDPR policy.

All communication on official social media platforms will be clear, transparent and open to scrutiny.

Via the Parental Consent Form, signed by all parents/carers upon a child/young person starting at a PET school, parents/carers are informed of the official social media channels used by the school and PET and consent to their child's image being published therein. Where parental consent is not obtained, or parental consent is refused, schools must ensure that images of these children are not published on social media, or images with these children are included are appropriately edited to ensure these children are not identifiable.



Staff expectations

Members of staff who follow, like, subscribe or comment on official social media channels via their personal social media accounts, are advised to ensure their accounts have suitable security settings, have an appropriate disclaimer and do not bring themselves, the school or PET into disrepute in any way, in line with the Staff IT AUA and PET Staff Code of Conduct.

When posting to official school or PET social media accounts users must:

- Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
- Always act within legal frameworks including: libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equality laws.
- Ensure that they have appropriate consent (from adults as well as pupils) before sharing images on the official social media channels.
- Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school or Trust, unless they are authorised to do so.
- Inform their line manager, the DSL (or deputies) and/or the Principal of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from pupils and/or parents.

Monitoring

School and Trust 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 5 school days, even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt or refer to the appropriate school / Trust channel or procedure. Regular monitoring and intervention are essential when 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 official social media channels adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.

Digital communications must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain.

Unacceptable conduct using official social media channels, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school / Trust and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.

The school / Trust will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy.

Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school / Trust 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 relevant policies / procedures.



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 / Trust, account administrators must handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity. If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, account administrators should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken.

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:

- *Professional*
- *Engaging*
- *Conversational*
- *Informative*
- *Friendly*

Use of images

School / Trust use of images on social media 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 relevant Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, Online Safety policy and Parental Consent Form for pupils appearing in images. Staff members and parents should be made aware of images / videos being taken. 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 pupil images / videos publicly online other than via official school/Trust social media accounts or websites.
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school / Trust social media accounts. Pupils 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 for safeguarding or parental consent reasons.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.



Monitoring posts about the school / Trust

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school / Trust and respond to these appropriately.

Managing school / Trust social media accounts

Members of staff who have access to post on official social media accounts must have received training from an account administrator, this will include the following:

The Dos

- Do be respectful to all parties.
- Do ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author.
- Do think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion.
- Do seek advice from a line manager or account administrator if you have any concerns about content that has been posted.
- Do consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that could bring the school or PET into disrepute.
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material.
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation.
- Don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate or harmful content.
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.



Appendix

Pendle Education Trust (PET) official social media channels include at the time of writing:

- PET Twitter (@pendleeducation)
- PET Instagram (@pendleeducationtrust)
- PET LinkedIn (@pendleeducationtrust)
- PET YouTube (@pendleeducationtrust3072)
- Colne Primet Academy Twitter (@_CPAcademy_)
- Colne Primet Academy Facebook (Colne Primet Academy)
- West Craven High School Twitter (@WestCravenHigh)
- West Craven High School Facebook (West Craven High School)
- Castercliff Primary Academy Twitter (@SHINEatCPA)
- Castercliff Primary Academy Instagram (@castercliffprimaryacademy)
- Casterton Primary Academy Twitter (@SHINECasterton)
- Casterton Primary Academy Instagram (@castertonprimaryacademy)
- Pendle Primary Academy Twitter (@SHINEatPPA)
- Pendle Primary Academy Instagram (@pendleprimaryacademy)
- Pendle Primary Academy YouTube (@PendlePrimaryAcademy)

