



Social Media Policy

Responsible for policy:
Chair of Directors

CC3: Quality Provision and Performance

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Definitions

In this **Social Media Policy**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i **'The Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company named at the beginning of this **Social Media Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Blue Sky, SS Peter and Paul, St Gregory, St John Fisher, St Patrick, Cardinal Wiseman, Shared Services Team.**
- ii **'Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.
- iii **'Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.
- iv **'Governance Professional'** means the Governance Professional to the Board or the Governance Professional to the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- v **'Chair'** means the Chair of the Board of the Directors, or the Local Governing Body appointed from time to time.
- vi **'Catholic Senior Executive Leader'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- vii **'Diocesan Schools Commission'** means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- viii **'Local Governing Body'** means the governing body of the School.
- ix **'Governing Body Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Governing Body of the School, from time to time.
- x **'Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.
- xi **'School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- xii **'Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)
- xiii **'Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body elected from time to time.
- xiv **'Academy Head of IT'** means the person responsible for ICT across the Academy
- xv **'ICT Team'** means the team of staff supporting the Academy Head of IT and the individual academies

Scope of this Policy

We actively encourage the responsible use of social media. Responsible use of social media can be positive for learning and teaching; it can also be personally enjoyable and beneficial for our organisation. This policy outlines what standards are expected of anyone who works for the schools in The Romero Catholic Academy using social media as well as what actions may be taken when it is considered a member of staff may have breached this policy.

This policy applies to all staff use of social media, including

- on behalf of the school;
- as part of their work directly with pupils
- in their wider professional lives; and
- in their personal lives.

1. Introduction

Social media is a term used to describe a suite of applications or tools on the internet and is sometimes referred to as Web 2.0. Social media is unique because it supports collaboration and the sharing of ideas and opinions across a global scale and the content is usually managed by the users rather than the provider of the applications.

Social media activities can include, but are not limited to:

- maintaining a profile page on social/business networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn
- writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person
- taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards
- leaving product or service reviews on business websites or customer review websites
- taking part in online polls
- raising positive profile for the school; promoting events, celebrating success and circulating key information such as recruitment

Organisations including The Romero Catholic Academy are finding ways to use social media to help them achieve their objectives through engaging their employees in new and innovative ways, building new relationships with all stakeholders and managing/ promoting their Catholic identity and reputation online.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 The widespread availability of social media means it is important to understand how to use it effectively and sensibly, both in the workplace and during personal use.
- 2.2 This policy aims to ensure that The Romero Catholic Academy is not exposed to legal and governance risks through the use of social media and that its reputation is not adversely affected.
- 2.3 This policy also aims to ensure that employees of The Romero Catholic Academy are protected while using social media and feel empowered to contribute to collaborative online activity when it supports their role within the Academy.
- 2.4 The policy applies to all workers and employees of The Romero Catholic Academy from senior managers to temporary workers, and to all uses of social media. It also relates to pupils usage of social media too.
- 2.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the E-safety policy; Acceptable Usage policy which provides additional information.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 The Romero Catholic Academy believes that when taking part in social media you should be honest, straightforward, and respectful. The lines between public and private can become blurred so assume that everything you write in your digital footprint, is permanent and can be viewed by anyone (including colleagues, Governors, parents and pupils, prospective and current employers) at any time. Also, assume that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues and your schools.

3.2 The main aim of school social media policies is to keep everyone within the school safe and within the law.

3.2.1 For staff and governors, requirements typically include:

- Not accepting friend requests from current pupils, or ex-pupils under the age of 13 (extreme caution with past pupils as adults)
- Not responding and reporting as appropriate, if a child sends a friend request
- Using extreme caution when corresponding with parents via social media, and preferably using a school email address instead and the correct channels
- Only posting things that they would be happy to be attributed to them as a teaching professional
- Using the tightest privacy settings possible
- Not using social media on school devices, or on personal devices while on the school premises unless it is appropriate to do so (e.g. managing an official social media platform as part of role)

3.2.2 Parental requirements often include:

- To refrain from posting photos, videos on social media publicly that include other children at the school (GDPR and Safeguarding compliance)
- Not using social media on their own devices while on school premises as mobile phones should not be in use whilst on the school site
- Not accessing social media while helping at school or on school visits
- Raising queries, concerns and complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media – whether on their own pages, in closed groups (e.g. groups set up for school parents to communicate with each other) or on the school's pages
- Not posting anything malicious about the school or any member of the school community on social media platforms

3.2.3 Pupils are typically required to:

- Not join any social networking sites if they are below the permitted age (13 for most sites including Facebook and Instagram)
- If pupils are old enough to access sites
 - tell their parents/carers if they are using the sites, and when they are online
 - not to approach/ engage with staff via their personal social media accounts
 - be aware how to report abuse and inappropriate content
 - not videoing/ live streaming or accessing social media on school devices, or on their own devices while they're at school
 - not make inappropriate comments (including in private messages) about the school, teachers or other pupils

4. Terms of Use

- 4.1 Use of social media for personal reasons does not need to be approved by the company.
- 4.2 Proposals to use any official social media applications, in relation to your school (or The Romero Catholic Academy) as part of your role within the company must be approved by your Principal.
- 4.3 The following terms should be adhered to at all times, including during periods of leave.
You must ensure that your content, or links to other content, does not:
- interfere with your work commitments or your typical working hours
 - contravene the Catholic identity as detailed in the Object. Staff are expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of the Academy, and the Academy Company;
 - staff should ensure posts preserve and develop the Catholic character of the Academy and the Academy Company
 - have regard to the Catholic character of the Academy and the Academy Company and not to do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same
 - posts should be sympathetic to the Catholic ethos of The Romero Catholic Academy
 - contain libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing content
 - contain breaches of copyright and data protection
 - contain material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature
 - include confidential information to the company
 - Bring the company into disrepute or compromise the company's brand and reputation (this includes use the company to endorse or promote any product, opinion or political cause)
- 4.4 Whilst the use of social media and collaborative working is encouraged, all employee responsibilities covered in other policies and codes of conduct remain in force.
- 4.5 Staff should not provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the School and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the organisation, unless permission has been sought by the Principal.
- 4.6 If content published by you or others implicates you in the breach of these terms, it may lead to an investigation and disciplinary action in accordance with The Romero Catholic Academy's disciplinary policy.
- 4.7 Staff should not use a work email address to sign up to any social media and any personal social media page should not make reference to their employment with the Company (excluding LinkedIn, where prior permission is sought from the Principal if appropriate.)
- 4.8 Staff must be mindful to take photos or posts from social media that belongs to the School for their own personal use.
- 4.9 Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place.
- 4.10 Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

5. Social Media and Recruitment

- 5.1 The School may use internet searches to perform pre employment checks on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where the School does this, it will act in accordance with its data protection and equal opportunities obligations.
- 5.2 Candidates may be informed if their profile page(s) have been, or are intended to be accessed by The Romero Catholic Academy. If anything is discovered that makes them unsuitable for the position, they will be informed, and provided with an opportunity to dispute the information from their point of view.

6. Social Media and Absence

- 6.1 Members of staff are free to use social media when absent, (e.g due to illness) but they should be aware that on occasion, these circumstances can lead colleagues to jump to conclusions. Equally, members of staff should be mindful that photos are not always posted on social media at the time they are taken and some illnesses are more visible from photos than others. Caution is always advised on both sides.
 - 6.1.1 For example, if an employee phoned in sick with a broken leg and then checked into a ski resort, posting a photo of them on the slopes later that day, that would appear to be convincing evidence that their illness was not genuine. It would still need to be explored.
 - 6.1.2 On the other hand, if an employee is off due to stress and they post a photo of themselves on a walk in the countryside, this is not necessarily inconsistent with the illness they have reported to you. In fact, it may be beneficial for that employee to be getting some fresh air and exercise rather than staying at home.
- 6.2 In each case, it is important to investigate facts first. If there have been inappropriate social media posts of employees inconsistent with the information given to school then it can be informally discuss as part of a return to work meeting or welfare meeting, as the member of staff may have a legitimate explanation. If there is considerable concern, then the school may decide to take further action and commence a more formal investigation with the social media posts being considered as evidence.

7. Networks and Contacts

- 7.1 All professional contact details gained during the course of your employment are the property of the company and are regarded as confidential information. This includes information contained in databases such as address lists contained in Outlook, or business contact lists created and held on any electronic social media format, including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- 7.2 You must be mindful of contacts on social media. Staff in The Romero Catholic Academy should not be linked with pupils or parents/ carers in the school (unless appropriate e.g. a relation). Pupils under 13 years must be discouraged from having an account and all pupils/ parents discouraged from making contact with staff through any social media platform. An appropriate channel should be found.
- 7.3 Employees who are responsible for maintaining a LinkedIn group on behalf of the company (we do have an account for The Romero Catholic Academy) must ensure that the account login details are registered with the Shared Services Team. A separate database of business contacts contained in any LinkedIn group maintained on behalf of the company must be created.
- 7.4 A copy of all contact/ network information gained during the course of your employment must be deleted from your personal social networking accounts.

8. Staff Protocol for Use of Social Media for school accounts

Where any post is going to be made on the School's own social media the following steps must be taken:

- 8.1 Ensure that permission from the pupils's parent/ carer has been sought before information is used on social media and all GDPR requirements have been adhered to (a form is sent out to collect this information at regular intervals)
- 8.2 Ensure that there is information relating to a child/children in the post is minimal - for example any certificates in photos are blank/without names or the child's name cannot be seen on the piece of work.
- 8.3 The post must be a positive and relevant post relating to the pupils, the good work of staff, the School or any achievements.
- 8.4 Social Media can also be used to issue updates or reminders to parents/guardians.
- 8.5 Make sure any posts reflect the school in good light and avoid using text with poor grammar or spelling mistakes.
- 8.6 If an individual is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting they should refrain from posting it until it has been discussed with Principal.
- 8.7 If an individual sees Social Media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Academy or another member of the school community, they should contact the appropriate Senior Leader in school.

9. Policy Enforcement

- 9.1 Breaching the terms set out within this policy could result in the offending content being removed from any school site and the employee responsible being suspended from using social media as a representative of The Romero Catholic Academy.
- 9.2 Content that you publish which causes damage to the company or its employees may lead to disciplinary action. This could lead to a finding of misconduct or gross misconduct in accordance with The Romero Catholic Academy's disciplinary policy.
- 9.3 The Romero Catholic Academy reserves the right to check the profiles of employees.

10. Links to other policies

The Romero Catholic Academy Social Media Policy is linked to our;

- Code of Conduct (Based on CES model)
- CES Contract of Employment (details in relation to the Catholic Church)
- Disciplinary Policy
- Absence Management Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Parental consent form for social media (must specify permission is given for each platform)

11. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this policy to the Local Governing Body. This policy will be reviewed by CC3 Quality Provision, Performance and Standards.

Appendix 1 Example of Social Media awareness





The Guidelines to post on Social Media



We hope you will enjoy engaging with our social media pages.

Celebrating Success!



In our community, we are keen to share the many achievements of our pupils, staff and wider community. Please be aware that we cannot share a photo of every child on each event. We capture the moments and share so that you can enjoy the experiences on offer.

Be mindful of what you post/ tweet



Everyone can see your post/ tweet; prospective parents/ staff and all our current community of faith. Please select the appropriate method of communication. Sometimes, it is more appropriate to pop into the office than post something negative online for all to see. In a school community, we celebrate our diverse community. Comments made, may seem harmless to you, but others may read it in a different light. We don't expect visitors to consider all possible misinterpretations, but we DO as you to be mindful of it.

Audience



Please be aware that we discourage any of our children to be on Facebook/Inst/ Twitter etc and past pupils should be over 13 years of age. Staff may have their own profiles but they are discouraged from making connections with parents or past pupils online.

Information



We use social media to inform you of key decisions or events, for example school closure, arrival of a trip or a change in a planned activity. Please be patient, our priority is always the safety of the children and if all is in order, then we will share experiences including arrival. This page is used alongside our Parentmail communication for more urgent or immediate notifications.

Please be advised that if any user is inappropriate on our social media, we will have no option but directly speak with individuals and where appropriate, ban or block users from this site.