



Evendons Primary School

NURTURE INSPIRE FLOURISH

Social Media Policy

Signed:	
Chair of Trust Board:	Claire Delaney
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1.0 Bellevue Place Education Trust – Our commitment

Learn, Enjoy, Succeed

Every BPET child and staff member enjoys a broad (LEARN) and enriched (ENJOY) learning experience, enabling them to achieve far greater individual success (SUCCEED) than they might previously have thought possible.

Our Mission

To grow hubs of like-minded, autonomous schools, well-supported, all of which combine academic rigour with highly enriched opportunities that deliver a personalised approach to education and exceptional outcomes for all.

Our Difference

We are leading the way in delivering high quality education through a skills-based curriculum, applying the best of the independent and state sectors to deliver breadth of opportunity and pupil enrichment. We empower all our schools as individual entities that best meet the needs of the communities they serve and have a strong relationship with parents, who are our key partners in delivering the vision.

Our Promise

Every child is an individual. Our role is to nurture pupils' potential through a personalised approach to learning. BPET children are happy, independent, confident all-rounders. We encourage a 'be interested and be interesting' attitude in children and staff alike. We don't just teach; we want our pupils to have a passion to learn. Our focus is on all pupils, regardless of background or academic ability, focusing on pupils with Special Educational Needs as well as those who are more-able.

2.0 Introduction

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn), for communicating with each other (Snapchat, Messenger, Whatsapp) and ways to browse for information (Wikipedia, Yahoo!, Google), to shop online and to play games.

In 2019, 79% of UK adults (18+) have a smartphone and spend on average 2 hours 34 minutes online on their phone every day. 1 in 5 minutes online is on social media and more than 35% of the time online every day is owned by Facebook or Google.

While recognising the benefits of these media provide for communication and promotion of our schools, this policy sets out the principles that all BPET school staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media for personal use.

It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school and Trust is safeguarded.

Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all BPET school Local Advisory Boards, all teaching and other staff, whether employed by BPET or employed directly by the school, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school or BPET, teacher trainees and other trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media/internet for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school (see sections 5, 6, 7.)

This policy applies to personal social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, along with blogs, chatrooms, gaming or discussion forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia*, social bookmarking and the video platform *YouTube*. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

4.0 Legal Framework

Bellevue Place Education Trust is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- the Human Rights Act 1998
- Common law duty of confidentiality, and
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Teachers Standards 2012

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the GDPR 2018
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
- School or Trust business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and
- Politically sensitive information.

Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003, and
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All schools and the Trust Board could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who

engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc. or who defame a third party while at work may render schools or the Board liable to the injured party.

5.0 Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school and BPET policies:

- BPET Staff Code of Conduct
- BPET Safeguarding Policy
- BPET Data Protection Policy
- BPET Staff Disciplinary Policy
- All other school policies

6.0 Principles – be professional, responsible and respectful

You must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school or the Trust and your personal interests.

You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the school or Trust into disrepute.

You must not represent your personal views as those of the school or the Trust on any social medium unless you have been approved in writing to represent the views of the school or the Trust on social media.

You must not discuss personal information about pupils, the school or the Trust staff and other professionals you interact with as part of your job on social media.

You must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations, the school or the Trust.

You must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of the school or the Trust.

7.0 Personal Use of Social Media

Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of the school or the Trust or service providers for the school or Trust in their personal webspace. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and the Trust and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services.

Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any pupil, whether from their school or any other school, unless the pupils are family members.

Staff members should not discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils and parents/carers they receive in their personal social media accounts.

On leaving the school or Trust, staff members must not contact any pupils by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact pupils from their former schools by means of personal social media.

Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues, Trust staff and other parties and school or Trust corporate information must not be discussed on their personal webspace or other social media repositories.

Photographs, videos or any other types of images of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members wearing school or Trust school's uniforms or clothing with school or school logos or images identifying sensitive school or Trust premises must not be published on personal webspace.

School or Trust email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia* in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the employer itself.

Schools or the Trust logos or brands must not be used or published on personal webspace.

Schools do not permit use of personal social media while at work either on school equipment or personal devices such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets. Staff members are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties and, in practice, personal use of the internet should not be on the school's time.

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 workplace.

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.

8.0 Using Social Media/Internet on Behalf of BPET Schools

- 8.1 Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils (as appropriate) or their parents.
- 8.2 Access to and editorial rights of official school or BPET sites for the purpose of promoting the school or trust to their parent body or local community will be restricted to certain authorised staff members, including Trust Marketing Manager, School Head Teacher, Office Manager or Office Support staff and teaching staff with an IT remit.
- 8.3 Staff must not create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage. Advice should be sought from the Headteacher, Marketing Manager, Operations Director or the Chief Executive.
- 8.4 Official school sites must be created only according to the requirements specified by the Chief Executive or Headteacher. Sites created must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age and the GDPR 2018 requirements.
- 8.5 Staff members must at all times act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

9.0 Monitoring of Internet Use

The Central Trust team and school can, at any time, monitor usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.

Users of Trust or school email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system.

10.0 Breaches of the Policy

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with any school or BPET Staff Disciplinary Policy.

A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of any school or the Trust; or any illegal acts or acts that render the Trust liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

11.0 Approval by the Bellevue Place Education Trust Board

This policy has been formally approved and adopted by the BPET Board.