The Cam Academy Trust SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY	
To be read in conjunction with the Complaints Policy and the Data Protection Policy	
Approved in consultation with the Audit & Risk Committee on behalf of the Trust Board:	28th February 2023 29th March 2023
To be reviewed:	Every 2 years or as appropriate
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Responsible Officer:	Trust Publicity and Communications Officer
Category - 1	Version 2

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube and Snapchat) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some online interactive games and video sharing platforms, such as YouTube, have social media elements to them.

The Cam Academy Trust recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by The Cam Academy Trust, its schools, staff, parents, carers and children.

SCOPE

This policy is subject to the Trust's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.

This policy:

- Applies to all trust employees and people working within the Trust on a consultative, interim or voluntary basis to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the Trust or school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.

The Trust and its schools respect privacy and understand that staff and pupils/students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the Trust's/school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the Trust/school or impacts on the Trust/school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

It would be expected that communications using school social media sites or using personal social media accounts with reference to the school or Trust use language or images that would be considered appropriate within an education environment.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of

this policy.

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES

A Facebook Page and Twitter handle will be created for each school within the Trust. Separate Facebook Pages and Twitter handles can also be created for Sixth Forms. Other social media systems can be set up and used with agreement from the Trust Communications and Publicity Manager, these could include LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp and other social media systems.

Departmental accounts should not be created, and everything should be posted through the school's main social media profiles. This can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but it is important that departmental accounts do not detract from the main school profiles.

Before any content is posted on the social media profiles, the school's Senior Leadership Team should determine the social media strategy and objectives, which should answer the following questions:

- What do we want to achieve?
- What are the issues, challenges or opportunities?
- What behaviour are we trying to change?
- What messages or information do we need to communicate?
- What content do we need to share? (e.g. images, videos, hyperlinks, events)

Process for creating new accounts

Anyone wishing to create a new social media account for their school must present a business case to the School Leadership Team which covers the following points: -

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed?

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including interim staff, consultants, volunteers or parents.

All social media profiles will be created by our communications advisors at Athene Communications Ltd to ensure consistent styling and branding.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTROL

Roles & Responsibilities

SLT – (Including the school's Senior Communications Lead)

- Developing the school's social media strategy – see guidance above
- Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use
- Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
- Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents
- Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required
- Receiving completed applications for Social Media accounts
- Approving account creation
- Overseeing the content of the social media channels

Communications Manager / Communications Consultants

- Create the account following SLT approval
- Store account details, including passwords securely

- Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)

Administrator / Moderator / Other members of staff

- Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account regularly
- Delivery of the school's social media strategy

Staff

- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Attending appropriate training
- Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Monitoring

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 48 hours during term-time (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. During school holidays, an automated message should be in place to state when the account will next be monitored and how to get in contact in the case of an emergency. Regular monitoring and intervention are essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Behaviour

The Trust requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.

Digital communications by staff must always be professional and respectful and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.

If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must forward these enquiries to the Trust's Publicity and Communications Manager, Judy Czylok – contact details are at the end of this document.

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

The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive or inappropriate use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.*

The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally and report the

matter to the Trust. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, the CEO, and the Chair of Governors, and may act according to the disciplinary policy. The matter must also be reported to the Trust Audit and Risk Committee.

Legal considerations

Users of social media should comply with 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 laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling negative comments

When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.

If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken. Should you be unsure of the action to take, contact the Trust's Publicity and Communications Manager for guidance.

If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

If complaints are made against the school through comments on the school's social media profiles, school users should respond politely and encourage the issue to be taken offline (e.g. "Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Please can you email [EMAIL ADDRESS] so we can discuss this matter with you?"

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:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly

Use of images

School use of images 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 school's digital and video images policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.

All photographs of students should be checked by another member of staff to ensure that all children have the necessary image permissions from their responsible parent, guardian or carer.

Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts

Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students 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.

If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately, if necessary with advice from the I.T. Department.

Images may be taken in accordance with the school's Fair Use Policy – which allows members of staff to take photographs for such purposes providing they are saved and stored on a central computer as soon as possible after taking the images. The images should then be deleted from personal phones / cameras as soon as possible.

The full name of students should not be published alongside a photograph, unless the school has the necessary permissions in place. Otherwise, a simple caption including the first name and year/house group can be published instead – please refer to the Trust's Data Protection Policy for further guidance.

Personal use

Staff

Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken

The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.

Pupil/Students

Staff should communicate with children in accordance with the school's Fair Use Policy.

The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.

Pupils/students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved using the school's behaviour policy

Parents/Carers

If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.

The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.

Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

To raise an issue or complaint, parents are politely requested to do this through the appropriate channels by contacting the school's reception in the first instance or by emailing:
cat-info@catrust.co.uk.

Monitoring posts about the school

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

The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

What are the age limits for social media apps and platforms?

It is important that parents/carers, pupils/students and staff know the age restrictions that are applied to many different social media channels and apps.

This is a fast-moving area so we would recommend that parents/carers always check this information through an internet safety website such as Internet Matters, for which there is a link below.

This information is not provided as an endorsement of the social media channels and apps, it is provided only to help parents/carers support children to use social media safely.
https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/what-age-can-my-child-start-social-networking/

Appendix

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where appropriate

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Questions

If you are unsure about anything to do with your school's social media profiles and would like some advice, please contact the following people:

- Judy Czylok – Publicity and Communications Manager, The Cam Academy Trust (JCzylok@catrust.co.uk)
- Ryan Hyman – Director of PR and Education, Athene Communications (ryan@athene- communications.co.uk)