Social Media Policy

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The King Edward VI Foundation recognises the importance of colleagues engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in the fast-moving world of the internet and social media – these are services such as "Facebook", "Twitter", "Instagram" and many other online tools through which people connect and share information.

With this in mind, the Foundation has developed the following guidelines to provide direction and guidance when participating in online social media activities. It is an entirely personal decision whether a member of staff chooses to participate in a blog, discussion forum, online social network or any other form of online publishing. However, participation in such social media should always be done responsibly.

This policy applies both to the use of social media for your school and your own personal purposes, whether during normal working hours or in your personal time. Its purpose is to help staff avoid the potential pitfalls of sharing information on social media sites and should be read in conjunction with the Acceptable Use Policy.

The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using your school's IT facilities and equipment or your personal equipment.

The Foundation permits the incidental use of the internet and social media so long as it is kept to a minimum and takes place substantially out of normal working hours. Use must not interfere with your work commitments (or those of others). Personal use is a privilege and not a right. If your school discovers that excessive periods of time have been spent on the internet provided by your school either in or outside working hours, disciplinary action may be taken and internet access may be withdrawn without notice at the discretion of your school's Headteacher.

Use Good Judgement.

- Always think about the type of image that you want to convey on behalf of the Foundation, and your school when you're posting on social networks and social media sites. Remember that what you post will be viewed and archived permanently online once you hit the "publish" button.
- Be sure to always represent your own views and not to allude to the personal views of others in your internet posts.
- Staff must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives as separate as possible. Staff should therefore exercise caution when posting anything about their personal lives if their social media profile is directly accessible on any social media platforms. Staff are entitled to a social life like anyone else. However, the extra-curricular life of an employee at the school has professional consequences and this must be considered at all times when sharing personal information.
- When writing an internet post, you should consider whether the contents would be more appropriate in a private message. While you may have strict privacy controls in place, which are strongly encouraged, information could still be shared by others. It is always sensible to consider that any information posted may not remain private.
- A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks involves passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. Don't blindly repost a link without looking at the content first.
- Pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer before clicking on unfamiliar links. They actually serve a purpose and protect you and your school.
- When using Twitter, Facebook and other tools, be sure to follow their printed terms and conditions.
- When contributing online do not post confidential school or student information.
- Do not follow or include current students as friends on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Depending on the circumstances, it may also be inappropriate to add as friends or follow parents, guardians or carers on any social media network.
- Keep in mind that one of the biggest benefits of social media is that it gives others another way to talk to you, ask questions directly and to share feedback.
- Be responsive to others when conversing online. Provide answers, thank people for their comments, and ask for further feedback, etc.
- You must not post anything that may offend, insult or humiliate others, particularly on the basis of their sex, age, race, colour, national origin, religion, or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity.
- You must not post anything that could be interpreted as threatening, intimidating or abusive. Offensive posts or messages may be construed as cyber-bullying.
- You must not post disparaging or derogatory remarks about the Foundation or its Governors, staff volunteers, pupils or parents, guardians or carers.
- You must not use social media in a way which could constitute a breach of any policies contained in the school's Code of Conduct.

Profiles and Identity

- Remember your association and responsibility to the Foundation in online social environments. If you identify yourself as an employee of the King Edward VI Foudation, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students and consistent with the aims and ethos of the school. Remember how you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.

- No identifying personal information, such as home or work addresses, email addresses or phone numbers, should appear on blogs or other social media.
- Be cautious how you setup your profile. The same guidelines apply to this information as well as the substantive content you post. When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself make sure you select an appropriate image.
- Familiarise yourself with the privacy settings of any social media you use and ensure that public access is restricted. If you are not clear about how to restrict access, you should regard all your information as publicly available and behave accordingly.

Copyright and Fair Use

- Respect copyright and fair use guidelines.
- Hyperlinking to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarise and give credit where it is due. If you are re-posting photos, videos, poems, music, text, artwork or other copyrightable material, take the extra step of identifying the creator of the materials to the extent reasonably possible.
- When hyperlinking to other sites and media, be sure that the content to which you are hyperlinking is appropriate and consistent with these guidelines.
  - Staff should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media.

And if you don't get it right…

- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make it clear what you've done to fix it.
- If it's a major mistake (e.g., exposing private information or reporting confidential information), please let someone know immediately so your school or the Foundation can take the proper steps to help minimise the impact it may have.
- You may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. If you fail to remove postings, this could result in disciplinary action.

A breach of this policy may be treated as misconduct and could result in disciplinary action including in serious cases, dismissal.

The Foundation and your school regularly monitors the use of the internet, social media and e-mail systems to check that the use is in accordance with this policy. If it is discovered that any of the systems are being abused and / or that the terms of this policy are being infringed, disciplinary action may be taken which could result in your dismissal.