

Title	Social Media
Associated Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional and Safe Conduct (TPO/STA/10) • Disciplinary Procedure (TPO/STA/22) • Safeguarding and Child Protection (TPO/HS/05) • Data Protection Policy (TPO/STA/25)

REVIEWED: SEPTEMBER 2019

NEXT REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2022

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Brooke Weston Trust expects all members of staff, governors and volunteers to maintain a high level of professional standards including their conduct on social media platforms. This policy outlines how staff, governors and volunteers should conduct themselves when using all forms of social media sites with a view to minimising risk in terms of:
 - safeguarding concerns or incidents where Trust staff/governors'/volunteers' integrity could be undermined,
 - the school be brought into disrepute and;
 - professional relationships with colleagues and students compromised.
- 1.2 Additionally, adhering to the policy reduces the risk of staff/governors/volunteers inadvertently contravening sections of the Data Protection Act or falling foul of libel, defamation and copyright laws.
- 1.3 The Brooke Weston Trust Online Safety policy (TPO/STU/12) outlines its commitment to promoting amongst students the safe use of technology and to promote understanding and awareness of the risks attached to the use of digital technology.
- 1.4 Brooke Weston Trust requests that complaints are made in line with the Complaints Policy which is a constructive approach to address any concerns, rather than negative opinions or complaints being aired on social media platforms (see paragraph 10).
- 1.5 This Policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and is entirely non-contractual. It may be amended, withdrawn, suspended or departed from at the discretion of the Trust.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 The policy is recommended for all Trust staff, governors and volunteers. The policy is concerned with the personal use of social media sites, not with work/official social media sites. Any Trust staff wanting to create a work-related social media site must discuss this with and obtain approval from the CEO.
- 2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Acceptable Use policy.

3. Who is responsible for carrying out this policy?

- 3.1 The Principal is responsible for the local implementation of this policy and should ensure that all academy staff, governors and volunteers are aware of the Social Media policy and procedure and of their responsibilities under it. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that breaches of the policy are investigated and addressed.
- 3.2 Staff, governors and volunteers are expected to adhere to the policy and procedure and ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner that will not place students or vulnerable adults at risk, bring the school into disrepute or damage their own professional reputation.
- 3.3 The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and the governors of the Academy and will remain under constant review by Brooke Weston Trust.

4. What are the principles behind this policy?

- 4.1 Brooke Weston Trust's commitment to equality of opportunity will be observed at all times during the operation of this procedure. This will ensure that everyone concerned is treated fairly and without discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation, trade union membership or activity, political or religious belief and unrelated criminal conviction.
- 4.2 Brooke Weston Trust's expectations of Professional and Safe Conduct (TPO/STA/10) will be adhered to with regards to operation of personal social media platforms.
- 4.3 This policy is not intended to make Trust staff and governors aware of the risks they could face when sharing information about their personal/professional life.
- 4.4 Staff, governors and volunteers should be encouraged to report any concerns that they have regarding content placed on social media sites to their Academy Principal.

5. Social media sites covered

- 5.1 This procedure covers all types of social media platforms, which include but are not limited to:
 - Social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat
 - Blogging
 - Micro blogging sites e.g. Twitter
 - Video clips and podcasts e.g. YouTube
 - Discussion forums

6. Responsibilities of staff, governors and volunteers

- 6.1 Brooke Weston Trust staff, governors and volunteers are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media sites.
- 6.2 Staff, governors and volunteers should not accept students as "friends" and information must not be posted that would disclose the identity of students.
- 6.3 Students must not be discussed on social media sites.
- 6.4 Photographs or videos of students or their homes must not be posted on social media sites.
- 6.5 Staff, governors and volunteers must not post information on sites, (e.g. photographs and videos), that could bring the school or Trust into disrepute.
- 6.6 Staff, governors and volunteers must not represent their own views/opinions as being those of the school or the Brooke Weston Trust.
- 6.7 Potentially defamatory remarks towards the school, the Trust, staff, governors, students, students' relatives, partner organisations etc. must not be posted on social media sites.
- 6.8 Staff/governors must observe the requirements of the Equality Act and the Human Rights Act and must not use any offensive or discriminatory language on social media sites.
- 6.9 Staff/governors must not divulge any information that is confidential to the Academy, Trust or a partner organisation.

7. Security

- 7.1 Staff, governors and volunteers should be mindful when placing information on social media sites that it is potentially visible to a large audience and could identify where they work and with whom, thereby increasing the opportunity for false allegations and threats. In addition it may be possible through social media sites for children or vulnerable adults to be identified, which could have implications for their security.

7.2 Furthermore, there is scope for causing offence or unintentionally causing embarrassment, for example if students find photographs of their teachers which may cause embarrassment and/or damage to their professional reputation and that of the Academy/Trust. In addition, it may be possible for other social media site users to identify where staff/governors live, which could have implications for individual security.

7.3 Therefore the utmost consideration should be given to the information posted on social media sites and staff/governors are advised to use appropriate security settings on such sites in order to assist in limiting the concerns above. See guidelines at Appendix 1.

8. Employee group/networks

8.1 Employee groups should not be created on social media sites such as Facebook.

9. Disciplinary action

9.1 Staff, governors and volunteers should be aware that the use of social media sites in a manner contrary to this policy may result in disciplinary action.

9.2 As with all personal internet use, staff, governors and volunteers using social media sites must not access social media sites for personal reasons during working time.

9.3 Any instances of cyber bullying will initially be addressed under the existing disciplinary procedures and may result in disciplinary action.

10. Disputes with third parties

10.1 In the event that a dispute with a third party or parent is initiated or perpetuated by means of social media this must be reported to the school's Executive Principal as soon as possible. No response to any post should be made until directed to do so.

10.2 The Executive Principal will consult with the Trust Director of IT and the Chief Executive who will decide what the response (if any) should be or whether to refer the matter to the Trust's legal advice team.

10.3 No conversation about any matter of complaint or dispute should be initiated by members of staff via any social media channel. They should instead refer the issue to the relevant senior member of staff and /or relevant school policies.

11. Policy Review

11.1 This policy will be monitored as part of the Academy's annual internal review and reviewed on a three year cycle.

APPENDIX 1 – Guideline for staff, governors and volunteers on use of social media

The use of social media sites like Facebook carries a great deal of risk. For example, Facebook profiles can often contain names, addresses and dates of birth. This can lead to anyone being able to set up a credit card in your name. Also, identity thieves would find it easier to piece together information about you from different websites/resources and use it to their advantage. This sounds unlikely but it is a real risk: the Press often carries stories about people who have lost money or had their credit rating damaged, which can be very tedious to correct.

Further information and guidance for staff, governors and volunteers on the appropriate use of social media and methods of protecting your data and privacy can be found on the UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/teachers-and-school-staff>.

Each social media platform will also contain advice on how to adjust security settings:

- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/help/325807937506242/>
- Twitter – <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/twitter-privacy-settings>
- Instagram – <https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501>

Personal use of Social Media Sites

I have read, understood and agree to abide by this policy. I understand that employees and governors of ACADEMY NAME are expected to adhere to the policy and procedure and ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner that will not place children or vulnerable adults at risk, bring ACADEMY NAME into disrepute or damage their own professional reputation.

Name:

Signature:

Date: