



**KING EDWARD VI
FOUNDATION
BIRMINGHAM**

Educational excellence for our City



**KING EDWARD VI
ACADEMY TRUST
BIRMINGHAM**

Social Media Policy

Responsible Board/Committee	Academy Trust Board and Foundation Board
Policy Type	Central Policy (Group A)
Policy Owner	External Relations
Statutory	No
Publish Online	No
Last Review Date	June 2025
Review Cycle	2 years This policy will not expire but will be reviewed as per it's designated cycle. This policy remains effective whilst the review is taking place and will only become non-applicable once the updated version has been approved.
Next Review Date	June 2027
Version	1

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. This policy

The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham (the 'Charity') and King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham (the 'Academy Trust') (collectively the 'Foundation'), and all of the Foundation's

schools, have a shared policy and guidance for staff on the use of social media. In this policy, 'social media' is taken to cover online personal and professional networking sites, blogs, video sharing sites, online forums, chatrooms and the comments sections of online media. The Foundation recognises the importance of colleagues engaging, collaborating, learning and sharing in the fast-moving world of the internet and social media.

With this in mind, the Foundation has developed this policy, incorporating practical guidance and support for staff, using social media. It is an entirely personal decision whether a member of staff chooses to participate in an online blog, discussion forum, social media 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 work-related and personal purposes, whether during normal working hours or in personal time, recognising that both uses have potential reputational implications not only for an individual but also their place of work. 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 relevant Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Conduct and arrangements for filtering and monitoring.

The policy applies regardless of whether social media is accessed using IT facilities, equipment and infrastructure provided by the Foundation or an individual's personal equipment.

2. General principles of social media use

Foundation staff might use social media for work-related and personal use.

Those with work-related social media responsibilities should only post in line with the requirements of their role and should only do so under the oversight and advice of colleagues who have an overarching responsibility for social media use in their place of work. Specific advice on this matter, particularly around how to post on behalf of the Foundation or one of its schools, can be sought from the Foundation's Head of Engagement.

Unless specific social media sites are blocked, the Foundation permits the incidental personal use of social media by its staff using IT facilities, equipment and infrastructure provided by the Foundation so long as this use is kept to a minimum and takes place substantially out of normal working hours. Use must not interfere with the work commitments of the individual concerned or those of others. Personal use is a privilege and not a right.

If it is discovered that excessive periods of time have been spent on the personal use of social media using IT facilities, equipment and infrastructure provided by the Foundation, whether inside or outside working hours, disciplinary action may be taken and access to these sites may be withdrawn without notice at the discretion of a school's Headteacher (for school staff) or the Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation (for Foundation Office staff).

The Foundation and its schools reserve the right to monitor the use of the social media to check that the use is in accordance with this policy. If it is discovered that social media is being used in a way that infringes this policy and the guidance it contains, disciplinary action may be taken.

As encouraged by *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, as part of the staff recruitment shortlisting process for roles within the Foundation, we carry out online searches as part of our due diligence on shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we may wish to explore with the applicant at interview. We inform shortlisted candidates that online searches are conducted as part of due diligence checks.

3. Practical guidance for staff

Always use good judgement

- Always think about the type of image that you want to convey on behalf of the Foundation when you are posting on social media. 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 publicly accessible on any social media platforms. Staff are entitled to a personal 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 online post, you should consider whether the content 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 social media involves passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. Don't 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 serve a purpose and protect you and your school.
- When using a social media site, be sure to follow its terms and conditions and community guidelines.
- When contributing online, do not post confidential or personal information related to the Foundation, its schools, pupils, colleagues or partners.
- Do not follow or include current pupils as friends on any social media site. Depending on the circumstances, it may also be inappropriate to add as friends or follow parents, guardians or carers on any social media site.
- 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 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, and be particularly mindful of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 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, partners, pupils or parents, guardians or carers.
- You must not use social media in a way which could constitute a breach of any policies or guidance contained in the relevant Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Conduct or arrangements for filtering and monitoring.
- If in any doubt, do not post!

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 Foundation, or an individual school within it, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues, parents, and pupils and consistent with the aims and ethos of the school and wider Foundation. Remember that how you present yourself online should be comparable to how you present yourself in person.
- No identifying personal information, such as home or work addresses, email addresses or phone numbers, should appear on social media.

- Be cautious about how you set up 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 site 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.

If you don't get it right...

- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make it clear what you have done to fix it.
- If it is a major mistake (e.g. exposing private information or reporting confidential information), please let a senior member of staff 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.