



Guidance for School Staff

# The use of Social Networking Sites Guidance

---

Nurture Academies Trust has adopted the PACT HR recommended model procedure as agreed by Trade Unions.

Approved by the Nurture Academies Trust's Board of Trustees on: 12 December 2018

To be reviewed:: Every three years or sooner

Signed on behalf of Nurture Academies Trust's Board of Trustees: 

NB. This guidance will be retained for a period of 7 years from replacement

Version 2 / Dated: August 2013

# Contents

## Social Networking Sites Guidance for School Staff

Introduction .....	3
Who does the policy apply to? .....	3
Aims of the policy .....	3
Relevant Legislation .....	3
Responsibilities .....	3
Use of Social Networking Sites .....	4
Breaches of the Policy .....	5



## Introduction

Nurture Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the growing use of social networking sites such as blogs, MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, Youtube, Windows Live Spaces, MSN, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, chatrooms and instant messenger. Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list for illustrative purposes only and it should not be assumed that if it does not appear on this list the policy does not apply.

Staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries with pupils and there should be a clear separation of the private social lives of staff and that of pupils. Staff are advised that it is inappropriate to have on-line relationships with pupils (except where appropriate within family relationships) or to allow pupils access to their own pages. Similarly accessing pupils' pages is discouraged as this may cross the professional boundary that should be maintained between staff and pupils.

### Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to all school staff employed by the Academy. It will also apply to staff that are employed through agencies, casual workers, volunteers and Trustees.

### Aims of the policy

- Ensure that employees and others listed above are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites and understand the importance of using them safely and securely
- Safeguard employees and others listed in the section above to ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable through their use of social networking sites
- Ensure that school maintains its duty to safeguard children, staff, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.

### Relevant Legislation

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, updated by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

### Responsibilities

Nurture Academies Trust's Board of Trustees shall ensure that all employees and those listed above are made aware of this policy and shall ensure that the policy is implemented and procedures are in place to deal with non-compliance.

Headteacher/Line Managers shall:

- Ensure that all staff, casual workers, volunteers and Trustees have received the relevant training and guidance in relation to the use of Social Networking
- Seek advice from Human Resources on the approach to be adopted when potential issues arise
- Investigate any allegations made in relation to the misuse of Social Networking
- Instigate disciplinary or other relevant procedures where appropriate to do so

Staff and those listed above will behave professionally and responsibly at all times and will comply with the policy

## Use of Social Networking Sites employees, casual workers, volunteers and Trustees:

- should not befriend pupils online as personal communication could be considered inappropriate and may potentially make them vulnerable to allegations.
- should not place inappropriate photographs on any social network space.
- should not post indecent remarks.
- If a message is received on their social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil they should report it to their Line Manager/Headteacher so that this can be investigated and the appropriate action taken.
- must not disclose any confidential information or personal data about any individual/pupil/colleague which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
- should not post photographs or comments about pupils, other colleagues, parents/guardians on social networking sites.
- should not make defamatory remarks about the school/colleagues/pupils/parents/guardians or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring school or the Local Authority into disrepute.
- should be aware of the potential for on-line fraud and should be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.
- should not access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment.
- Staff should set their Social Network (facebook) settings to the maximum. For guidance on how to do this please see Using Facebook safely A guide for professionals working with young people.



## Breaches of the Policy

In instances where it is alleged that an issue has arisen in connection with the use of social media the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure or other appropriate procedure.
- Nurture Academies Trust's Board of Trustees will then take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, Trustees, children and anyone else directly linked to the school. Certain breaches may lead to your contract of employment or other agreed terms of engagement being subject to summary termination.
- Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the School can exercise the right to monitor the use of the school's information systems and internet access where it is believed that unauthorised use may be taking place, to ensure compliance with regulatory practices, to ensure standards of service are maintained, to prevent or detect crime, to protect the communications system and to pick up messages if someone is away from school. If such monitoring detects the unauthorised use of social networking sites disciplinary action may be taken where appropriate.
- In certain circumstances the school or Local Authority will be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour where there are concerns as to its legality.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and sooner if necessary due to changing technology.

**COPYRIGHT** © 2016 City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, City Hall, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD1 1HY.

All rights reserved. No part of this document can be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this document) without the written permission of the copyright owner except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this document should be addressed to the Pact-HR Team via email [pact-hr@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:pact-hr@bradford.gov.uk).

**Warning: To perform an unauthorised act in relation to a copyright work may result in both a civil claim for damages and criminal prosecution.**