



Social Media Policy

Policy Statement

- 1 The Trust is an organisation with a Christian foundation. The ethos, values and relationships of the Trust, and its associated academies, are central to witnessing to the value of the foundation.

The Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust (DGAT) recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Bebo, LinkedIn, Twitter, and all other internet postings including blogs and wikis. It is also a valuable educational tool.

- 2 **Purpose & Scope:** This policy applies to the use of social media within all (DGAT) schools and for the use of social media for personal use by all DGAT employees, whether during normal working hours or in their personal time. Its purpose is to help staff avoid the potential pitfalls of sharing information on social media sites.

Home school agreements will make explicit reference to the use of social media and encourage parents not to use private accounts to share academy business.

- 3 **IT facilities:** The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the DGAT IT facilities and equipment or personal equipment owned by employees of the Trust.
- 4 **Personal use:** The Academy 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 employees' work commitments (or those of others). Personal use is a privilege and not a right. If an Academy discovers that excessive periods of time have been spent on the internet provided by the Academy either in or outside working hours, disciplinary action may be taken and internet access may be withdrawn without notice at the discretion of the Principal.

Guiding principles:

- 5 DGAT staff are required to behave responsibly at all times and adhere to the following principles:
 - i. Employees will be mindful of the personal use statement above when using both Academy IT facilities and their own private mobile devices during the working day.
 - ii. DGAT employees will not be "Friends" with pupils on any social media network and will not add pupils as Friends on a personal account. It is also inadvisable to add parents as Friends.
 - iii. DGAT employees must be mindful of how they present themselves and their Academy on such media. Whilst staff are entitled to use social media like

anyone else, staff need to be mindful that the extra-curricular/personal life of an employee at the Academy has professional consequences and this must be considered at all times when sharing personal information, including photographs.

- iv. DGAT staff will not disclose any academy business through any form of social media.
 - v. DGAT employees should always represent their own views and must not allude to other people's personal views in their internet posts.
 - vi. When writing an internet post, DGAT employees should consider whether the contents would be more appropriate in a private message. While staff may have strict privacy controls in place, information could still be shared by others. It is always sensible to consider that any information posted may not remain private.
 - vii. DGAT employees should protect their privacy and that of others by omitting personal information from internet posts such as names, e-mail addresses, home or work addresses, phone numbers or other personal information.
 - viii. DGAT employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the privacy settings of any social media they use and ensuring that public access is restricted. If DGAT employees are not clear about how to restrict access, they should regard all of their information as publicly available and behave accordingly.
 - ix. DGAT employees 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.
 - x. DGAT employees must not post anything that could be interpreted as threatening, intimidating or abusive. Offensive posts or messages may be construed as cyber-bullying.
 - xi. DGAT employees must not post disparaging or derogatory remarks about the Academy or its Governors, staff volunteers, pupils or parents.
 - xii. DGAT employees must not use social media in a way which could constitute a breach of any policies contained within any DGAT policy. :
- 6 **Removing postings:** DGAT employees may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. If employees fail to remove postings, this could result in disciplinary action.
- 7 **Breach:** A breach of this policy may be treated as misconduct or gross misconduct depending on the findings and could result in disciplinary action including in

serious cases, dismissal. Failure to abide by the guiding principles could have implication in law.

Monitoring

- 8 The Trust and Local Governing Body reserves the right to regularly monitor 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 dismissal.
- 9 The implementation and monitoring of this policy in individual academies is the responsibility of the Local Governing Body.

Other Related Documents

Data Protection Policy

Disciplinary Policy

Email & Internet Policy