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Social Media Policy

Policy Review

The responsibility of reviewing and maintaining this policy is Craig Dembicki (Managing Director). This policy will be reviewed annually.

Start date of policy: **3rd January 2017**

Updated: **1st July 2024**

Date of next review: **1st July 2025**

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Dembicki', is written over a white background.

Craig Dembicki
Managing Director
Education 1st

Introduction

Education 1st is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the use of social media sites. Education 1st concedes that the use of social media has become a significant aspect of society's lifestyle. However, this policy aims to ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking and how this can potentially have an impact on employment.

Education 1st believes it is important that school staff are able to use technology and related services effectively and flexibly. However, this must be balanced with Education 1st's duty to safeguard children, the wider community and the reputation of the provision.

All staff need to be aware that they are expected to maintain a professional distance from pupils. Therefore, staff should not be involved with social networking with students within the provision or outside of the provision.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that all staff use social networking safely and securely.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the risks associated with the use of social networking.
- Ensure staff know the risks of inappropriate use of social networking.
- Safeguard Education 1st staff in connection with the use of social networking sites and ensure that staff do not put themselves in a vulnerable position.

Definition of Social Media

Social Media is defined as "*Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking*".

These interactive websites generally allow parties using them instant communication and data sharing in a public forum. These websites include but are not limited to:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Tumblr
- Youtube
- Vimeo
- Vine
- Flickr
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Kik
- Swarm by Foursquare

There are many more examples of social media, and staff should use the guidelines outlined in this policy for all social media sites that they may encounter.

Use of Social Media Sites

As per guidance issued in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Social Media searches will be completed for all staff as part of Education 1st's safer recruitment processes.

Education 1st staff should be aware that when using social media anything that is said, shown or received could be made available to a wider audience than originally intended. They should follow and understand the following principles:

- Staff and individuals otherwise engaged by Education 1st are not permitted to access social networking sites for personal use via the provisions information systems or equipment at any time.
- They must not accept students as 'friends' and must not approach students to become their friends on social networking sites. Personal communication of this nature could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and make that individual vulnerable to allegations.
- Any student-initiated communication, or online friend requests must be declined and reported to the Senior Leadership Team or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff are advised to avoid online contact with previous or recent students of the provision.
- Staff should not share any personal information with any student including personal contact details, personal website addresses or social networking site details.
- If staff are online 'friends' with any parent/carer linked with Education 1st, they must ensure that they do not disclose any information or otherwise post details which may bring themselves or the provision into disrepute. Staff must not engage in any on-line discussion about any student attending the provision.
- Staff must not disclose, on any social networking site, any information that is confidential to Education 1st, Local Authority; or post anything that could potentially bring the Provision and Local Authority into disrepute.
- They must not disclose any personal data or information about any individual/colleague/student, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
- Staff should not post photographs of students under any circumstances and should not post photographs of colleagues or others in the educational community without their express permission.
- Care should be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed offensive to others.
- Staff are strongly advised to take steps to ensure their online personal data is not accessible to anybody they do not wish to access it. For example, they are advised to check the security and privacy settings of any social networking site they subscribe to and set these to maximum to ensure any platforms are strictly private and cannot be accessed.



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Breaches of the Policy

Education 1st does not want to discourage staff using social media. However, staff need to be aware that Education 1st will take seriously any circumstances that social media sites have been used inappropriately, including usage that is deemed as online bullying or harassment. The Operations Director and Operations Managers may exercise his/her right to monitor the use of the Provisions information systems, including internet access, where it is believed unauthorised use may be taking place. If such monitoring detects the unauthorised use of social networking sites, disciplinary action may be taken.

If any instances or allegations of inappropriate use of social networking sites are brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team, disciplinary action may be taken. The Senior Leadership Team reserves the right to take action to remove any content posted by staff which may adversely affect the reputation of the provision or the wider educational community or put it at risk of legal action.