COLLABORATIVE LEARNING TRUST

Working Together to Secure Success

POLICY
ON THE USE OF
SOCIAL MEDIA

(on behalf of Trust Schools)

Rationale for the use of social media at Collaborative Learning Trust

As part of its communication strategy, effective schools need to use a range of different media for conveying different types of messages to a varied audience: students, staff, parents/carers, governors, members of the community, prospective families, etc.

As the way in which society "consumes" news continues to evolve, so too must the way that we, as a school, communicate with our stakeholders. Increasingly this means exploiting social media in order to maximise the speed and "reach" of our communication.

Principles

As with all forms of external communication, it is essential that we establish certain principles so that we:
1. ensure the safeguarding of our students;
2. protect the Trust, trust schools and staff, from potential legal/disciplinary action;
3. maintain a positive image of the Trust and its schools;
4. maximise consistency;
5. operate in a professional manner and in accordance with all school policies;
6. do not breach confidentiality or data privacy or undermine the integrity of the Trust or its schools.

Given that the conventions which pertain to more traditional forms of written communication are sometimes not considered to apply to social media, it is even more important that organisations establish clear protocols for its use. The need for this is further underlined in view of the ease with which social media messages can be broadcast to a limitless audience.

Official Trust Twitter account

The official school Twitter account is *@CollaborativeLT*. This is the only account which is represented solely by the trust 'cog' as its logo. It is used to communicate messages of interest to large numbers of "readers", rather than specific groups. This includes news items which celebrate the success of students, staff and the wider school communities.

The official Trust Twitter account is operated by the following administrators, who can write new messages and re-tweet those written by others:
▪ Trust Admin Manager: School Marketing & Community Engagement
▪ HR Assistant

The trust Twitter feed will be available from the homepage of our Trust website, *www.collaborativelearningtrust.com* This ensures that messages can be accessed by parents/carers and other readers who do not follow Twitter, thereby maximising access. [As at August 2023, it is accessible from the website but not hosted as a newsfeed).

Where urgent messages need to be conveyed (e.g. regarding school closure), these will be communicated via the Trust Schools.

Approval to set up a Twitter account, Facebook page, etc.

Staff who wish to set up a group/faculty Twitter account/social media page must follow the following procedure:

1. Ask yourself the following questions to ensure that it is worthwhile setting up the account, and that you can meet the expectations of those who follow it:
   - What will you use it for?
   - Who is the intended audience?
   - Is there a more appropriate medium for this?
   - Do you have the capacity to update it regularly? *[Regularly should be every other day at least]*
   - What contingency do you have if you are unable to update it personally?
   - Do you have the necessary expertise?
2. If you still wish to proceed, discuss your idea with the Trust Admin Manager: School Marketing & Community Engagement and the appropriate Trust school leader.
3. Select an account/page name and a logo in consultation with the Admin Manager: School Marketing & Community Engagement and the appropriate Trust school leader.
4. Agree appropriate account settings.
5. Agree appropriate wording for the "Profile", or equivalent, to make it clear what type of information users can expect from the account/page.
6. Login details should be shared with the Trust Admin Manager: School Marketing & Community Engagement to allow for extra updating across the Trust.
7. Social media feeds should not 'go live' until the appropriate agreement has been gained from the Trust School Leader.

Protocols for the use of social media

The following protocols relate to the use of all forms of social media by all members of staff for all accounts which indicate a link with the Trust or any Trust school.

1. Tweets/posts, including links, must not be defamatory, intimidating, discriminatory, derogatory, hostile or offensive in any way, or contain any material which could be seen to diminish the reputation or image of the Trust or the school;
2. While accepting that the language used in social media tends to be less formal than in more traditional forms of written communication, the same professional approach to language and content should be applied, particularly as tweets/posts are often re-tweeted/forwarded;
3. Extreme caution must be exercised when making reference to individual students or staff, in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). No comments should be made relating to personal data, exam results, negative performance, etc. If in doubt, seek advice;
4. Permission must be sought from students and parents before photographs/videos are published;
5. The sending of 'sensitive personal data' or confidential information, whether relating to the sender or not, is forbidden;
6. The sending of any information which is not certain to be 'public knowledge' outside the school is forbidden;
7. Copyright of materials and intellectual property rights must be respected;
8. Use for personal financial gain, political purposes or advertising is forbidden;

9. Users are responsible for the messages they tweet/post and for contacts made that may result in responses being received;
10. Social media must not be used to solicit other people's views of the Trust or the school, without the express permission of the CEO or the appropriate Trust school leader.
11. Any account used by a member of staff in his/her capacity as an employee of the Collaborative Learning Trust should be used solely for that purpose, and not for personal posts.
12. All use of social media must also comply with the wider provisions of the "*CLT Computing Facilities Acceptable Use Policy for Staff*".

Use of "group chat" applications

Except where explicit permission is given by a member of the appropriate Trust School Leaders, members of staff must not set up social media "chat groups" (e.g. WhatsApp groups) for communication with parents and carers.

For sports fixtures etc, the Squad In Touch or similar extra-curricular activities platform should be used to communicate with parents and carers.

Monitoring and non-compliance

In order to protect students and staff and ensure that these protocols are adhered to, the use of social media will be monitored on an on-going basis.

Users of social media should be aware that improper use can give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment, defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract. Any breach of these protocols may be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. It is important to remember also, that improper use of social media can lead to prosecution.