SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY FOR LEIGHTON ACADEMY

Policy lead:	Mrs S Thompson
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Approval needed by:	

Leighton Academy is part of The Learning Partnership.

Introduction

These notes provide guidance to <u>ALL</u> categories of academy employees and Local Governing Board (LGB) members on the use of social networking websites.

Using social networking sites and other new media in a <u>personal</u> capacity

It is recognised that many employees or LGB members use the internet for personal purposes, and many participate in social networking on websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Tik Tok, You Tube etc.

In the majority of cases this is uncomplicated and trouble-free. However, there are some occasions where an employee or LGB member's personal life and work life can start to overlap through these sites. For example:

- Where students/parents making complaints, search the web for information about staff involved in their case – finding social networking sites, blogs and photo galleries could potentially fuel their concerns.

- Journalists increasingly use the web to research stories, and may reprint photos or comments that they find relating to academy employees.

- Some people also look on social networking sites to find out information about people applying for jobs.

Whilst the academy respects an employee/LGB member's right to a private life and has no wish to interfere with this, it is strongly recommended, when using such sites, to consider the potential impact on both the reputation of the employee/LGB member and that of the academy.

The use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. Staff who work for the academy with these groups should not have any social contact with them or their families, unless the reason for this contact has been declared and agreed with members of the SLT.

Recommendations

The academy must ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. It therefore requires each employee/LGB member using social networking websites to adhere to the following recommendations:

- ensure that matters relating to school are not discussed with staff, LGB members, pupils or parents
- not have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with
- ensure that you do not conduct yourself in a way that is detrimental to the academy
- ensure that you do not represent yourself as an employee of the academy
- take care not to allow your interaction on these websites to damage or compromise working relationships between members of staff, LGB members, students, or other stakeholders, e.g. it would be unwise for staff to allow current students access to any information which would compromise their position and authority in the academy
- not post photographs of yourself or your colleagues taken in the academy, nor photographs of students, clients or visitors within the academy, nor of academy logos
- ensure that you never post or send abusive or defamatory messages
- references should not be made to any staff member, LGB member, pupil, parents or school activity/event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the principal

- where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please declare this in writing on the allocated declaration form. It would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment

Security and identity theft

Employees and LGB members should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if the employee or LGB member is part of a "network". Employees and LGB members should <u>not</u> assume that their entries on any website will remain private.

Employees and LGB members must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they upload. It is important to avoid posting detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

With this in mind, employees and LGB members <u>must</u>:

- ensure that no information is made available that could provide a person with unauthorised access to the academy and/or any confidential information; and
- refrain from recording any confidential information regarding the academy on any social networking website.

Employees and LGB members are <u>recommended</u> to:

- Keep your passwords secure, change them regularly and use passwords that are difficult to guess
- Check your security/privacy settings on social networking sites to ensure that your information is only visible to the people who you want to see it, i.e. <u>friends</u> only
- Put your name into an internet search engine (e.g. Google) to see what people can find out about you. Are you happy with what they can view?
- Help your friends and colleagues by letting them know if you notice comments/information on their pages that might be misconstrued.

Employees and LGB members should always use their own judgment but should bear in mind other relevant academy policies around standard of conduct and the acceptable use policy.

Monitoring

These guidelines will be monitored regularly to ensure that they are operating fairly, consistently and effectively.