



# Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

## #GN12

Last updated: 01 September 2023

Review Date: 31 August 2026

## **Contents:**

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Online safety and social media conduct
3. Online messaging
4. Photography and images
5. Responsibility
6. Monitoring and review

Schedule of revisions

## **Statement of intent**

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the TCAT community could be negatively affected, such as damage to TCAT and our school's reputations.

This Code of Conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, with regard to TCAT or an individual school and its reputation.

We ask that parents read this document and ensure that they always act in accordance with the stipulations detailed below.

Where the term 'parents' is used throughout this policy it refers to anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil or acting in a legal capacity on their behalf in dealing with TCAT or an individual school and its staff.

## **1. Legal framework**

This document has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

This document operates in conjunction with the following TCAT and school policies:

- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Social Media Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Photography Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct

## **2. Online safety and social media conduct**

TCAT requests that parents behave in a civilised nature online and we will not tolerate any of the following online behaviour:

- Posting defamatory content about parents, pupils, the trust, school, or employees
- Complaining about TCAT's values and methods on social media or any of our individual schools
- Posting content containing confidential information regarding TCAT, any of our schools or any members of our community, e.g., a complaint outcome
- Contacting TCAT employees private accounts through social media, including requesting to 'follow' or 'friend' them, or sending them private messages, except where there is a friendship that pre-dates employment with TCAT
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff, TCAT or any individual TCAT school in general
- Posting images of any staff members or pupils without their prior consent

Parents' social media usage will be in accordance with the TCAT's Social Media Policy. TCAT retains the right to request that any damaging material is removed from social media websites.

If parents wish to raise a complaint this should be done through formal and established channels, TCAT has a Complaints Policy and Procedure in place.

We will take breaches of this Code of Conduct seriously and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution. Parents are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this Code of Conduct.

## **3. Online messaging**

We expect parents to use messaging apps, such as Facebook Messenger, for purposes beneficial to themselves, TCAT and our schools, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- Sending frequent messages to members of staff
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents, pupils, TCAT or any TCAT school
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information about members of staff, parents, pupils, TCAT or any TCAT school
- Bringing TCAT, an individual TCAT school or our staff into disrepute

We appreciate the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit TCAT and our school community by keeping it closer. We do not, however, condone parents sending frequent and unimportant messages to staff. Parents should understand that staff should not be contacted outside of working hours where possible. If parents wish to talk to staff, parents should arrange a meeting with the teacher by speaking to a member of staff at Reception.

Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, TCAT will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing. TCAT can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory content, occurs online.

TCAT's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the Governing Board or a Local Governing Body cause any issues through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

The Executive Headteacher/CEO can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

The Executive Headteacher/CEO can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

## **4. Photography and images**

Parents may be permitted to take photos of their children at certain school events, such as sports day or during a theatre production; however, parents are only able to take photos of their own children and should only share photos of their own children on social media.

Parents must not take photos of other children, staff members or volunteers, nor post them on social media without the consent of those within the images or, where applicable, their parents.

During events outside of school, such as dropping children off at the school gate, or whilst visiting the school, parents must not take photos of any members of TCAT or the school community, nor share these photos on social media.

More information can be found within our Photography Policy.

## **5. Responsibility**

Parents are responsible for supporting TCAT and our schools by monitoring their own use of social media and online messaging. Parents must adhere to the Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents at all times.

Parents are responsible for ensuring they support TCAT and our schools by monitoring their children's use of social media and online messaging. Parents must support their children in adhering to the Pupil Code of Conduct.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

The Executive Headteacher/CEO will review this Code of Conduct in line with the review schedule on the front of this document and will communicate any changes to all teachers and parents.

The next scheduled review date for this document is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026.

Signed by:

_____	Executive Headteacher/CEO	Date: _____
_____	Chair of Governing Board	Date: _____

## Schedule of revisions

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