

Three Counties Academy Trust



# Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

## #B3

Last updated: 26 October 2022

Review Date: 31 August 2025

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## **Statement of intent**

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

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 the Trust or 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 the Trust or 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 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

Three Counties Academy Trust 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 school or its employees
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media
- Posting content containing confidential information regarding the school or any members of its community, e.g. a complaint outcome
- Contacting school employees private accounts through social media, including requesting to 'follow' or 'friend' them, or sending them private messages
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff, the Trust or any individual Trust 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 Trust's Social Media Policy. The Trust retains the right to request that any damaging material is removed from social media websites.

If parents wish to raise a complaint, the Trust has a Complaints Policy and Procedures 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, the Trust and 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, the Trust or the school
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information about members of staff, parents, pupils, the Trust or the school
- Bringing the Trust, an individual Trust school or its staff into disrepute

We appreciate the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit the Trust and 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, the Trust will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing. The Trust can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory content, occurs online.

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

The Executive Headteacher 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 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 the Trust or 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 the Trust and school 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 the Trust and school 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 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 2025.

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Executive Headteacher Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Trustees Date: \_\_\_\_\_

