HARLANDS EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Online Communication and Social Media Policy

Managed by:	Club Manager	**Date:** 02/09/26
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Reviewed by:		

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Scope and purpose

This policy applies to employees and volunteers whenever they use social networks, messaging services, forums, blogs, video platforms, selling or dating sites, or any other online space where content can be shared. It protects children and families, maintains professional boundaries and reduces the risk of confidential information or inappropriate material becoming public.

Core expectations

Staff remain responsible for what they publish, react to, forward or allow others to post from their accounts. Online and professional identities can easily become connected, and content may be copied or retained even after it is deleted. Staff must therefore use sound judgement both during and outside working hours.

Use during work

- Children must not access social media during club or camp sessions.
- Children must not open internet during club or camp sessions unless a specific, supervised activity has been authorised.
- Staff must not use personal social media during working time or while responsible for children.
- School or club devices must not be used to access personal accounts. Devices provided for club use may be used only for approved work purposes.

References to the setting

Unless the Headteacher has given explicit approval, staff should not identify themselves online as an employee of Harlands Educational Trust or Explorers present personal views as those of the school or club.

Content that must never be posted or shared

- Images, recordings, names or details that identify a child, family, club location or routine.
- Confidential information obtained through work, including staffing, attendance, finances, incidents or personal circumstances.
- The school's logos, branded materials, internal documents or marketing content without permission.
- Illegal, abusive, discriminatory, defamatory or otherwise harmful material.
- Comments or images that could reasonably damage confidence in Harlands Educational Trust or Explorers undermine a colleague.
- Photographs of staff wearing branded clothing where the post could create an inappropriate association with the setting.

These restrictions continue after employment or volunteering ends.

Online relationships and messaging

- Staff must not request or accept online connections with children currently attending the setting or former attendees who are under 18.
- Where a child or parent follows or contacts a staff member unexpectedly, the staff member should not engage through the personal account and should remove or block the connection where appropriate.
- An existing friendship with a parent does not permit discussion of the club, a child or confidential matters. All service-related communication must use the setting's official channels.
- Work chat groups may be created by managers where necessary, but they must avoid sharing children's identities, sensitive information or material that should be held on an official system.

Good personal security

Staff are encouraged to use strong, unique passwords, multi-factor authentication and the highest suitable privacy settings. Personal addresses, phone numbers and other identifying details should not be made publicly available. Accounts should be reviewed periodically for old or inappropriate content.

Reporting and consequences

Any online activity that creates a safeguarding concern must be reported to the DSL immediately. Other potential breaches should be raised with the relevant manager. Depending on the circumstances, a breach may lead to disciplinary action or referral under safeguarding procedures. Only the Headteacher may issue statements to the media on behalf of the setting.

Related documents

Safeguarding Children; Staff Code of Conduct; Whistleblowing; Data Protection; Photography and Filming.