

Tas Valley Church Schools Federation

Social Media Policy



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| Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:- | Tas Valley Federation |
| On:- | |
| Chair of Governors:- | Diane Perry-Yates |
| Last updated:- | |

Social Media Policy

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| Name of school: | Tas Valley Federation |
| Date of Policy: | Spring 2022 |
| Next Review: | Spring 2025 |
| Members of staff Responsible: | SLT |

1. Social media

- 1.1 The Tas Valley Federation believes that it is important to manage the on-line reputation of its schools.
- 1.2 Online Reputation Management (ORM) is about understanding and managing our digital footprint (everything that can be seen or read about the school online).
- 1.3 We manage and monitor our social media footprint carefully to know what is being said about the school and to respond to criticism and praise in a fair, responsible manner.

2. Staff, Governors', pupils' and parents' SM presence

- 2.1 Social media (including here all apps, sites and games that allow sharing and interaction between users) is a fact of modern life, and as a school, we accept that many parents, staff and pupils will use it. However, we expect everybody to behave in a positive manner, engaging respectfully with the school and each other on social media, in the same way as they would face to face.
- 2.2 This positive behaviour can be summarised as not making any posts which are, or could be, construed as bullying, aggressive, rude, insulting, illegal or otherwise inappropriate, or which might bring the school or (particularly for staff) teaching profession into disrepute. This applies both to public pages and to private posts, e.g. parent chats, pages or groups.
- 2.3 If parents have a concern about the school, we would urge them to contact us directly and in private to resolve the matter. If an issue cannot be resolved in this way, the school complaints procedure should be followed. Sharing complaints on social media is unlikely to help resolve the matter, but can cause upset to staff, pupils and parents. It also undermines staff morale and the reputation of the school (which is important for the pupils we serve).
- 2.4 Many social media platforms have a minimum age of 13 (note that WhatsApp is 16+), but schools commonly deal with issues arising on social media with pupils/students under the age of 13. We ask parents to respect age ratings on social media platforms wherever possible and not encourage or condone underage use.
- 2.5 However, the Federation does not encourage underage use, it acknowledges reality in order to best help our pupils/students to manage issues if they arise. Online safety lessons will look at social media and other online behaviour, how to be a good friend online and how to report bullying, misuse, intimidation or abuse. However, children will often learn most from the models of behaviour they see and experience, which will often be household members.

- 2.6 Parents/carers can best support this by talking to their children about the apps, sites and games they use.
- 2.7 Within our schools, email is the official electronic communication channel between parents and the school, and between staff and pupils.
- 2.8 Pupils/students should not be 'friends' with or make a friend request to any staff, governors, volunteers and contractors or otherwise communicate via social media. Exceptions may be made, e.g. for pre-existing family links, but these should be declared upon entry of the pupil or staff member to the school.
- 2.9 Pupils/students are discouraged from 'following' staff, governor, volunteer or contractor public accounts (e.g. following a staff member with a public Instagram account). However, we accept that this can be hard to control (but this highlights the need for staff to remain professional in their private lives).
- 2.10 Staff are reminded that they are obliged not to bring the school or profession into disrepute, and the easiest way to avoid this is to have the strictest privacy settings and avoid inappropriate sharing and oversharing online. They should never discuss the schools or stakeholders on social media and be careful that their personal opinions might not be attributed to the Federation or local authority, bringing the Federation into disrepute.
- 2.11 All members of the Federation community are reminded that it is important to comply with any school guidance on recording digital images and video. Permission must be granted before uploading photographs, videos or any other information about other people.

3. Social media incidents

- 3.1 Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the school Behaviour Policy (for pupils) or Disciplinary Procedure (for staff).
- 3.2 Further to this, where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the Federation community, the Federation will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly.
- 3.3 Where an offending post has been made by a third party, the Federation may report it to the platform where it is hosted, and may contact the Professionals' Online Safety Helpline (run by the UK Safer Internet Centre) for support or help to accelerate this process. The police or other authorities may be involved where a post is potentially illegal or dangerous.

4. Extremism

- 4.1 The Federation has obligations relating to radicalisation and all forms of extremism under the Prevent Duty. Staff will not support or promote extremist organisations, messages or individuals, give them a voice or opportunity to visit the schools, nor browse, download or send material that is considered offensive or of an extremist nature by the Federation. We ask for parents' support in this,

especially relating to social media, where extremism and hate speech can be widespread on certain platforms.

5. Further questions

- 5.1 If parents have further questions, they can contact the school; the NSPCC has a parent online safety helpline which can help with general issues that are not school specific.