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Responsible person: Marketing Lead/Marketing Officer

Social Media and Networking Policy

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This policy has been created to protect individual members of staff and students. The policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using school IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff, pupils or any other IT/internet enabled equipment.

Anyone setting up a social media account that is directly connected to The Boulevard Academy must follow the guidelines in this policy. (This applies to using the name of The Boulevard Academy, the Academy logo/s or is clearly attached to The Boulevard Academy in some way.)

1. Rationale

The use of social media is becoming increasingly ingrained in both professional and personal capacities and brings opportunities to engage, create and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that both staff and students are aware of and able to take advantage of new technologies and services, however it is equally important to ensure that social media use is balanced with duties to school, community, legal responsibilities and personal reputation.

The Academy's use of social networks is impacted by our duty to safeguard students. Further information is detailed in our Safeguarding Policy and our Online Safety Policy which can be found on our website.

The policy requirements stated here aim to provide balance to support creativity and communication whilst providing guidance for good practice. They apply to all members of staff and students.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Safeguard all students and promote wellbeing;
- Ensure users are not exposed to risk as a result of their actions;
- Use social media in a respectful, positive and productive way which respects all parties involved;
- Ensure that the reputation of The Boulevard Academy, its staff and governors is protected;
- Protect the Academy from legal risks.

2. Definitions and Scope

The Academy defines social media as 'websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.' Social networking sites include but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Discord, Twitch, LinkedIn, Pinterest and WhatsApp.

Many features of this policy also apply to other types of online platforms such as virtual worlds.

All staff and students should be aware that any information that they share through social media apps, even if they are privately shared, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation.

3. School-sanctioned use of social media and/or social media accounts using the name The Boulevard Academy, the Academy logo, or clearly attached to The Boulevard Academy in some way.

Social media has many legitimate uses to support student learning and to share news with the wider Academy community. For instance, the Academy and departments within the Academy have official Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. There are also possibilities for using social media to support student learning and keep relevant stakeholders up to date with the school.

When using Academy social media accounts and/or social media accounts using the name of The Boulevard Academy, the Academy logo, or being clearly attached to The Boulevard Academy in some way, the following practices must be adhered to:

1. A distinct and dedicated social media site or account must be set up by the Marketing Team. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held and should be linked to an official school email account (a personal professional account does not suffice). Social media accounts must have official Academy branding by the Marketing Team. If an account is identified (that uses The Boulevard Academy name or logo, or is clearly attached to the Academy in some way) that is not an official Academy approved site, this should be reported to the Marketing Team immediately.

2. Any updates to passwords must be shared with the Marketing Team.
3. The content of any approved Academy social media site and/or social media accounts using The Boulevard Academy name, the Academy logo, or clearly attached to the Academy in some way, must be entirely professional and reflect well on the school.
4. Staff must not publish photographs of students without consent. For Years 7-8 that consent must come from parents and be written. All written consent forms are updated on SIMS. Students in Year 9-11 are deemed of age and have the ability to provide consent for themselves. They reserve the right to remove consent at any time, at which point any photos that they are identifiable in must be removed from the Academy's social media. Academy approved social media sites must use images of students in suitable clothing only.
5. Standard practice is to publish only the first name and initial of surname of students, unless consent has been given by parents or students who are deemed of age (Year 9-11).
6. Staff must consider the Safeguarding and Data Protection Policy when making any posts on school social media accounts.
7. Any links to external sites from Academy approved social media accounts must be appropriate and safe. Only appropriate hashtags are permissible. If in doubt, consult the Marketing Team.
8. Any inappropriate comments on, or abuse of, Academy approved social media and/or social media accounts using The Boulevard Academy name, Academy logo, or clearly attached to the Academy in some way, should immediately be removed and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Marketing Team (if appropriate). It is the responsibility of everyone using the site and social media in general to report abuse immediately.

4. Use of social media in practice for staff – for personal and professional use

1. Staff must not have 1:1 communication, including direct messaging (DM), with students through any social media, apart from via Academy approved accounts or Google Classroom.
2. Staff should not request or accept any current student of The Boulevard Academy of any age or any ex-student of The Boulevard Academy under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account unless they are the parent of the student or a close family member.
3. It is advisable that staff do not have contact with past students (above school age). Staff may remain in communication with past pupils via a school email account or the Academy approved social media accounts.
4. Any communication received from current pupils on any social media sites and/or social media accounts must be reported to the DSL immediately.
5. If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communication involving any student in any social media, these must be reported immediately to the DSL.
6. Staff must ensure that, wherever possible, and where social media sites allow, their privacy settings on social media sites are set so that students cannot access information relating to their personal lives. This includes public profile photos that can include personal information in the backgrounds such as house addresses or children.
7. Appropriate public profile photos are advised as they are vulnerable to misuse by students who find personal staff accounts. Inappropriate profile photos include holding or consuming alcohol or drugs, posing whilst scantily clad, or participating in inappropriate behaviour. Please note in the instance of student misuse of a personal staff image, action will be taken but staff must understand that on-line content is difficult, if not impossible to retract once posted or sent.
8. Staff are instructed to consider the reputation of The Boulevard Academy in any posts or comments related to the Academy on any social media accounts. Reputational breaches by staff will result in disciplinary action.

9. All email communication between staff and students of The Boulevard Academy must be made from an official school email account (any deviation from this in an emergency must be reported to the DSL and the line manager). Staff should not use personal email accounts or personal mobile phones to make contact with students of The Boulevard Academy, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances such as school trips or away matches that have been given prior approval by the Principal.
10. Staff must not post or publish on the internet or on any social networking site, any reference to the Academy, their colleagues, parents or students or discuss students or colleagues or criticise the Academy. Staff may like, share or make appropriate comment in response to the Academy's official social media accounts, but at the risk that their personal accounts are more visible to students, parents and other stakeholders.
11. Staff must not post images on any unofficial Academy social media account that includes pupils, unless sharing posts made from an official Academy social media account.
12. Members of staff are responsible for overseeing and monitoring any social media account attributed to their area of responsibility where the social media account is using The Boulevard Academy name, the Academy logo, or clearly associated with The Boulevard Academy in some way.

5. Guidance and advice for staff

Social networking sites are fundamentally insecure platforms for discussions which contain sensitive information. Privacy laws can be violated and the reputation of the Academy can be damaged if the public sees a discussion of any sensitive information taking place on social media. Staff should be aware that these types of cases can result in disciplinary action.

Staff may not share information which is confidential about the Academy. This includes information about services, programmes, financial, strategy, and any other internal confidential or sensitive workplace information that has not been publicly released by the Academy. These are given as examples only and do not cover the range of what the Academy considers confidential and sensitive. If staff have questions about whether information is confidential or sensitive they must speak to their line manager or SLT before releasing it.

The Boulevard Academy logo may not be used without explicit permission in writing from the Marketing Team.

Workplace Privacy

The Boulevard Academy respects the rights of staff to privacy and to express themselves. However, the Academy and members of staff must also respect and protect the privacy of fellow staff members, students, parents and others. Privacy and confidentiality must be maintained in every possible way.

Staff must not discuss students or family related information via social networking and public social media, texting or online unless it is via an approved medium and for a professional related purpose.

Staff are advised to be extremely cautious in conversations with other staff, parents and volunteers in social networking, on the basis that privacy laws can be violated even if a person's name is not shared.

The Boulevard Academy will honour the privacy rights of current and past employees, current and past students and their families, and anyone else associated with the Academy, by seeking permission before writing about or displaying internal school events which may be a breach of their privacy and confidentiality.

Privacy and Security Settings

The Boulevard Academy recommends staff use security and privacy settings provided by social networking sites. Irrespective of privacy settings, staff are advised to be respectful and responsible in all activity if it in any way involves or references The Boulevard Academy or any colleagues.

Staff must recognise that there is the possibility of being legally liable for something inappropriate which is shared online.

The Media

If a member of the media or non-traditional online media (including bloggers) contacts a member of staff about the business of The Boulevard Academy (e.g. programmes, services, students, parents, clubs, policies, practices, or additional business information of any kind), the individual must contact the Marketing Team prior to responding.

6. Use of social media in practice for students

1. Students' use of social media on any Academy IT systems, Academy managed Chromebooks, Geos or other laptops, equipment or devices and any personal devices (including hand held devices, watches or any other internet enabled device) brought on to the Academy site or at an Academy activity, must comply with the Online Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy. Students should also follow any additional code of conduct/guidelines put in place for online learning from home.
2. Students must not access any social media that is for adults only or if the pupil does not meet the minimum age requirement.
3. Anonymous sites must not be accessed as there is a high risk that inappropriate comments can be exchanged, causing distress or endangerment.
4. Bad, including offensive, explicit or abusive, language and inappropriate pictures must never be included in messages. Messages that could be upsetting or defamatory towards others or the Academy are not permitted.
5. Students must take responsibility for keeping details of their accounts private, using full privacy settings and logging off properly and not allowing others to use their accounts.
6. Students must report anything offensive or upsetting that they see online to the appropriate bodies, either by using the "report abuse" feature on social media or by speaking to their parents or a member of staff.
7. It is a serious offence to use another person's account, or to create an account in another person's name without their consent.
8. Students should not regard anything posted online as private and should remember that harassment, defamatory attitudes and racism are just some of the issues which could lead to prosecution.
9. Students should be aware that individual's "Digital Footprint" is becoming increasingly significant when it comes to job and university applications. If inappropriate, offensive or defamatory content is posted, it will be extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to eliminate the evidence.
10. If students see inappropriate postings by other students, they must inform a member of SLT so that steps can be taken to avoid possible repercussions.
11. The Malicious Communications Act 2003 makes provision for the punishment of persons who send or deliver a letter or any other form of communication that is indecent or grossly offensive, threatening, or contains information which is false or believed to be false, for the purpose of causing distress or anxiety. The Malicious Communication Act 2003 applies to social media interactions by students, parents and staff of The Boulevard Academy.

12. Students must have permission from the Marketing Team for any social media accounts using The Boulevard Academy name, the Academy logo, or clearly attached to The Boulevard Academy in some way.

7. Use of social media in practice for parents

1. Positive contributions to the Academy's social media are welcomed.
2. Any concerns or issues about The Boulevard Academy, its students or staff should be expressed directly to the Academy and not be voiced on social media.
3. Parents must obtain permission before posting pictures that contain other parents or their children, unless sharing or liking a post from the Academy's official social media accounts.
4. If parents become aware of inappropriate use of social media by their own or other people's children, they should contact the Academy so it can be addressed and to allow the Academy to work with parents to educate young people on safe and appropriate behaviour.
5. If parents become aware of the inappropriate use of social media by other parents or school staff, they should inform the Academy so it can be addressed.
6. Parents should be aware of the age restrictions that apply to popular apps. We recommend always checking before your child accesses an app and setting up the appropriate safety features. Details of age restrictions can be found on the Internet Matters website: [What age can my child start social networking?](#)