

East Midlands Academy Trust

Social Media Policy

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

Scope: East Midlands Academy Trust & Academies within the Trust	
Version: V6	Filename: Social Media Policy
Approval: May 2026	Next Review: May 2027 This policy will be reviewed by the Owner and approved by the Trust CEO at least annually.
Owner: Head of Shared Service	

Revision History

RevisionDate	Revisor	Description of Revision
V6 May 2026	DU	Page 4 remove reference to X platform. Section 5 additional expectation on negative engagement & political / religious opinion.
V5 May 2025	DU	Minor Revisions changes to some statements from should, to must/will, to remove ambiguity. Updated to reference KCSIE 2024
V4 October 2024	DU	Major content revision as adopting template provided by EMAT's new Data Protection Officer (Education Data Hub) Includes reference to and compliance with KCSiE 2023 Including Reference to Multi Factor Authentication to secure social media accounts Including reference to Online Safety Act 2023
V3 April 2023	DU	Minor revisions and review
V2 October 2022	DU	Minor revisions and review
V1 July 2021	DU	Policy issued



The Everyone's Invited campaign has rightly served to focus our minds on the need to continue to work together to protect children.

We, at EMAT, believe that schools play a crucial role in teaching pupils about sex and relationships, equality and diversity and modern citizenship as well as preparing them for the modern world. This is enacted through each school's culture, its curriculum, and all policies. We aim to give all pupils and staff a voice to enable them to act in a protective manner towards themselves and others. This includes developing a robust whistleblowing culture as well as fostering a culture of integrity and mutual respect.

We recognise that we have the responsibility of tackling sexual violence and harassment, instilling values in our stakeholders and encourage all to be driven by their strong moral compass. Like so much of education, our work must complement that undertaken by parents and carers so that young people receive a consistent message, and they can go about their lives free from harassment and abuse.

All of our schools will continue to engage with their stakeholders, listen to their concerns and signpost necessary support and provision within and beyond its schools. We ask that anyone who has experienced such behaviour, or who is suffering because of it, to report it to an appropriate adult either in the school or within the EMAT team so they can be supported, and steps can be taken to address the issue.

A dedicated NSPCC helpline is now available to support anyone who has experienced sexual abuse in educational settings or has concerns about someone or the issues raised. The dedicated **NSPCC helpline number is 0800 136 663 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk**

Staff members can also seek support from **Vivup on 0330 380 0658** or by visiting their website www.vivup.co.uk

If you are troubled about possible wrongdoing at work, please don't keep it to yourself. Our Speak Up Policy is there to reassure you that it is safe and acceptable to speak up and to enable you to raise any concern you may have at an early stage and in the right way. If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with:

- **EMAT Head of Governance & Compliance** – Alexandra Rigler – alexandra.rigler@central.emat.uk
- **EMAT Head of People & Culture** – Vicky Donnelly – vicky.donnelly@central.emat.uk

If you are unsure about raising a concern you can get free and independent advice from **Protect helpline on 020 3117 2520 or by emailing whistle@protect-advice.org.uk**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- We recognise the benefits of social media, but it also brings potential risk, to East Midlands Academy Trust (EMAT) and to individuals. For the purposes of this policy, 'social media' is defined as websites and applications (apps) that allow people to create or share content and/or participate in social networking. Examples include, amongst others Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, Pinterest, YouTube, WordPress, Tumblr, Ask.fm, WhatsApp, Messenger. This policy also refers to online gaming platforms and MMORPG ('massively multiplayer online role-playing games') e.g. World of Warcraft.
- We realise that a growing number of educationalists and education groups use discussion groups, online chat forums and bulletin boards to share good practice and disseminate information and resources. The use of online discussion groups and bulletin boards relating to professional practice and continuing professional development is encouraged, although staff are reminded that they are representing the school, and appropriate professional standards should apply to all postings and messages.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with EMAT's People and Culture Team's advice and guidance.

2. SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all use of social media, by all staff, governors, and volunteers, including personal use, work-related use, during working hours or out of hours, onsite or offsite, through the school's internet network or otherwise, on EMAT owned or personal devices, on official EMAT social media accounts/platforms or personal accounts/platforms. This should be read in conjunction with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

All staff are expected to comply with this policy. All leaders are responsible for ensuring their team read, understand, and comply with this procedure.

In order to be described as an official 'EMAT platform' or 'EMAT account':

- Master privileges and access permissions are held by EMAT.
- EMAT must have editorial oversight of all content.
- The number of staff members with administrative rights should be limited to those necessary

'Quasi trust' social media, for example a X account such as 'Miss Stuart History @ Secondary School' are not official trust platforms unless the above conditions are met. EMAT will not accept liability for content and postings on accounts containing EMAT or one of its academies names which have not been authorised and do not meet the official 'trust platform' criteria. Accounts used must be listed in the Privacy Notice, and personal information and pictures should not be posted without appropriate consent and oversight. Authorised accounts will remain the property of EMAT and may be deleted at any time by the trust.

Our Data Protection Officer - DPO will aid and provide further guidance on the use of social media with regards to data protection.

A breach of this policy could lead to disciplinary action.

If there are concerns that comments or posts may potentially be defamatory or libellous, EMAT may seek legal advice.

3. RECOGNISED EMAT CHANNELS

EMAT official social media channels are:

Platform	Account/Page name	Master administration role	Approved users (posting)	Date	
				Opened	Closed
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/eastmidlandsacademytrust/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Communications Apprentice Head of Governance		
	https://www.facebook.com/nianorthampton/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Communications Apprentice		
	https://www.facebook.com/princewilliamschool/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Teacher Chloe Jessop		
	https://www.facebook.com/castleacademyEMAT/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager		
	https://www.facebook.com/castlefoodbank/	Head of Communications	Children and Family Support Worker Emma Gray		
	https://www.facebook.com/HardingstoneAcademy/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Administrator Di Livingstone		
	https://www.facebook.com/StimpsonAvenueAcademy/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Senior administrator Linda Morris		
	https://www.facebook.com/OrchardAcademyMK/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager		

			Head of School Ellen Williams		
	https://www.facebook.com/ShepherdswellAc/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Head of School Ellen Williams		
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/east-midlands-academy-trust/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager		
	https://www.linkedin.com/company/emat-training-hub/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager		
	https://www.linkedin.com/company/nianorthampton/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager		
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/eastmidsacademy/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Communications Apprentice		
	https://www.instagram.com/nia_northampton/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Communications Apprentice		
	https://www.instagram.com/princewilliamschool/	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Teacher Chloe Jessop IT technician Rob Setchfield Assistant headteacher Rachel O'Connor		
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/@eastmidlandsacademytrust33	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager		
TikTok	https://www.tiktok.com/@ematwebsite	Head of Communications	PR & Communications Manager Communications Apprentice		

We use these social media accounts to celebrate successes and events in EMAT.

We seek consent, upon admission, from parents / carers (pupils where age appropriate) to include personal data in the form of pictures, names, quotes, displays etc

- The official use of social media sites is limited to activities with educational or community engagement objectives.
- The official use of social media as a communication tool has been formally risk assessed and approved by the **Head of Communications**
- Account information and login details must be held centrally in the Trust.
- Multi-factor authentication (a method of account security that ensures only legitimate users can access accounts and applications), will be enabled wherever possible.
- Official social media sites have appropriate privacy settings, are suitably protected and, where possible, linked to from our websites.
- Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including anti-bullying, image/camera use, data protection, confidentiality, and child protection.
- Written permission of parents and carers will be sought for posts involving names/images of children.
- Official social media use will be used in conjunction with other methods of communication, so as to reach all members of the community, including those who do not / cannot utilise social media.

4. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA STANDARDS

We will ensure online conduct, whether on behalf of EMAT, or posted on a personal account by a staff member, does not impact adversely on the reputation and integrity of the setting.

As part of our obligations under KCSIE we may check (and record the outcomes of these checks) the online presence including social media searches of our staff, Governors and volunteers.

Any use of social media that could impact on the school should meet these standards:

- Respect others, they may be affected directly or indirectly by your actions online
- Be honest about who you are, and what you know
- Be sensitive to others and to your position within the school
- Protect privacy and respect your confidentiality of that of others
- Maintain professional standards.
- If in doubt, don't post!

5. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA RULES

These rules must be followed, to ensure we meet the required standards: Be kind:

- Use common courtesy.

- Consider the potential effect on others of your words or content you post
- Always be responsible, credible, fair, and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
- Do not post or engage with negative or critical comments against individuals in the public eye or within the community.

Be honest:

- Be transparent about your role, especially when representing the school in an official capacity
- Only post about things you know to be true and only if it is appropriate to share them
- Do not post someone else's images or content without prior permission, or with appropriate acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce

Be sensitive:

- Do not enter into discussions with parents or colleagues via social media forums
- Do not post or share images, memes (or similar) or links that are inappropriate or have inappropriate content
- Do not post anything that could be considered; discriminatory, gossip, lies, offensive or threatening comments, comments/images that deliberately, negligently, or recklessly mock, tease, humiliate or harass an individual
- Be especially careful when posting about potentially inflammatory subjects.
- Do not give advice or information that you know to be contrary to the EMAT's policies or interests.
- Do not reveal any sensitive information about the school or about any plans that are not yet public.
- In the event of an incident affecting EMAT or any members of the trust community only official communications channels and accounts should comment or share news or updates.
- Be aware of the potential risks of communicating with current and ex-pupils in ways which may be considered as inappropriate, particularly if it could be shown that the adult-pupil relationship of trust had been breached.
- Only use official trust platforms to post trust information, celebration, news, and photographs. Ensure all posts are in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any inappropriate contact from pupils to a member of your academies SLT or a member of People and Culture at the earliest opportunity to prevent situations from escalating.
- Staff are reminded that, as a safeguarding issue, they should always be careful about who they are 'talking to'. It is very easy to hide an identity in an on-line conversation.

Protect privacy and respect confidentiality:

- Do not breach confidentiality – do not share anything private about anyone else
- Don't share anything about yourself that you wouldn't want the rest of the trust community to see.
- Be aware that what you post could divulge information such as your home address.
- Always follow the Data Protection Policy and ensure that you have secured the appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel
- Apply appropriate security and privacy settings to your social media accounts and the devices you use to access them.
- Make yourself familiar with privacy settings – these change often and with little or no warning; users with access to the school account will ensure that privacy settings are routinely updated
- Be aware of 'phishing' attempts through social media, where scammers may try to obtain information about you or other people, including passwords or financial information.

Maintain professional standards

- Do not 'befriend' or initiate engagement online with pupils, or families of pupils, (including former pupils who have recently left the school) unless you are the parent of the pupil or a close family member.
- If you do wish to communicate with or are contacted by a former pupil who has recently left the school, via social media, contact your head teacher or member of the people and culture team before engaging.
- Always be professional and aware that you are an ambassador for EMAT. Remember you are representing the trust and the same standards of conduct should be followed online as well as offline.
- Do not post or share offensive, discriminatory, or illegal content, or anything that would bring EMAT into disrepute.
- Ensure a clear distinction between trust, and personal life when making comments and posts.
- Do not post opinion on topical political/religious issues

If in doubt, don't post!

- Once you've posted something to the internet it cannot be taken back.
- Even if you delete content it may already have been copied or saved by another user and could be shared more widely.
- Even if you have posted in a closed or private group other members may not respect the rules or your confidentiality.

6. ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK, FOR PERSONAL USE

Personal use of the Internet including access to social media is only permitted in your own time (e.g. before or after work and during your lunchtime) and must not be left running “in the background”, whilst at work. Colleagues are advised to refer the ICT Acceptable Use Policy for further guidance.

7. ONLINE SAFETY CONCERNS

All colleagues will be made aware of the reporting procedure for online safety concerns, including breaches of filtering, youth produced sexual imagery (‘sexting’, ‘nudes’), cyberbullying, illegal content, and radicalisation. Refer to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025’ – in particular, but not exclusively para 133, 134-151 Online Safety.

8. INAPPROPRIATE REFERENCES TO EMAT OR COLLEAGUES

Colleagues who find that ‘friends’ have posted inappropriate material, relating to themselves on a social media site must ask them to remove it. If necessary, users can also report comments and posts to the site. Colleagues should advise their Headteacher or the People and Culture Team if there are likely repercussions for the setting.

Where staff are the target of complaints or abuse on social networking sites, site reporting functions should be used. Where possible screen captures (‘screen grabs’) or photos of any post, page, or thread which may be considered harmful, threatening or abusive will be taken.

Where colleagues find inappropriate references to EMAT, colleagues or pupils posted by parents, colleagues, pupils, or other members of the community, this should be reported to the Headteacher and or the People and Culture team as soon as possible. The Headteacher and the People and Culture team will take the appropriate course of action, which may include seeking legal advice or contacting law enforcement agencies e.g police. Colleagues must not attempt to deal with the situation personally.

9. COMPLAINTS

There may be times where individuals will bypass EMATs complaints procedures and use social media to criticise trust decisions or policy, and, in some cases, make malicious comments about colleagues or governors.

Whilst people have a right to freedom of expression under the Human Rights Act 1998, their opinions should not cause harm or distress. Any complaint, dispute or grievance posted on any social media channels which names colleagues, pupils, governors, or volunteers should be reported to the Headteacher and or People and Culture Team as soon as possible.

Concerns and complaints relating to colleague or pupil social media activity should be directed to SLT or People and Culture Team as appropriate.

10. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

In applying this policy, EMAT will adhere to its rights, responsibilities, and duties in accordance with UK law. The following legislation may be pertinent:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 etc).
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Malicious Communications Act 1988: Section 1
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Communications Act 2003: Section 127
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013
- Online Safety Act 2023.