

The Hills Academy

# Social Media Policy

*Created: November 2020*

*Scheduled Review Date: November 2023*



# POLICY

## Table of Contents

1. Philosophy
2. Key roles and responsibilities
- 2.3. Definition of Social Media
- 3.4. The school's e-safety team and network managers
- 4.5. Equal Opportunities
- 5.6. Inclusion
- 6.7. Training of staff
- 7.8. Social media use staff
- 8.9. Social media use pupils and parents
- 9.10. Site blocking
- 10.11. Cyber-bullying
- 11.12. Be Smart online
- 12.13. Policy Review

## 1. Philosophy

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At The Hills Academy we understand that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school. The academy appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging online; keeping in contact outside of [academyschool](#) can benefit the [academyschool](#) community by keeping the [academyschool](#) community closer.

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## 2. Key roles and responsibilities

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- The Governing Board has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Social Media Policy
- The Governing Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Social Media Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- The Governing Board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy
- The headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and procedures of The Hills Academy.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Social Media Policy and for ensuring pupils do so also **whilst at school**. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
- Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the social media habits of their child/children at home.
- Parents and carers will be expected to promote safe social media behaviour.

## 3. Definition of Social Media

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Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. It allows people to share information, ideas and views. Examples of social media include blogs, Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Myspace, Flickr and YouTube.

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### 3.4. The school's e-safety team and network managers

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- The school's e-safety team consists of: Mrs Whitehead (Headteacher and DSL) Mrs Williams (computing teacher and CEOP ambassador), Miss Starr (DDSL) and Nicci Henson Chair of Governors and Safeguarding link
- The school's network is managed by techies who can be contacted via [helpdesk@techies.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@techies.co.uk)

## 4-5. Equal Opportunities

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The Hills Academy is committed to working towards equality of opportunity for all children regardless of age, ability, race, gender and social circumstance. All pupils are of equal value and have the same right to take part in the varied activities and opportunities wherever possible.

## 5-6. Inclusion

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There is a commitment to inclusive practice. Inclusion is the responsibility of everyone in the school. The Equality Act 2010 provides an updated statutory framework to ensure that all people with protected characteristics are given equal opportunities. All children have the right to attend a mainstream school, unless their parents choose otherwise or if this is incompatible with 'efficient education for other children.' Alongside the act, The Disability Equality Duty (DED) introduced into The Disability Discrimination Act in 2005, place new duties on schools not to treat disabled pupils less favourably than others and to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. This may involve disabled pupils receiving more favourable provision.

### 6.7. Training of staff

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- At The Hills we recognise that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyber bullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Social Media Policy as part of their new starter induction.
- Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

### 7.8. Social Media use Staff

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- Staff may not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity.
- Staff may use social media during their break times on their personal devices.
- Members of staff should avoid using social media in front of pupils.
- Members of staff **must not** "friend" or otherwise contact pupils or parents/carers through social media. However the school recognizes that as a small local community staff and parents may have friendships unrelated to school and this kind of contact is permitted on the understanding that communication is not school related.
- If pupils or parents/carers attempt to "friend" or otherwise contact members of staff through social media, they should be reported to the headteacher.
- Members of staff **must not** post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.
- Where teachers or members of staff use social media in a personal capacity, they should make it clear that their views are personal.
- Teachers or members of staff must not post any information which could identify a pupil, class or the school.
- Members of staff should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal.
- Members of staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings The Hills Academy into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.
- Members of staff should regularly check their online presence for negative content via search engines.
- If inappropriate content is accessed online, please inform the headteacher in confidence.
- Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community, via social media, by teachers and members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

## 8.9. Social Media use – Pupil and Parent/Carers

- Pupils may not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity.
- Breaches of this policy by pupils will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to exclusion.
- Pupils and parents/carers **must not** attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact members of staff through social media. If attempts to contact members of staff through social media are made, they will be reported to the headteacher.
- If members of staff attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact pupils or parents/carers through social media, they should be reported to the headteacher.
- Pupils and parents/carers should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- Pupils and parents/carers **must not** post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.
- Pupils must not sign up to social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil’s age.
- If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, it **must** be reported to a teacher.
- Parents should use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves and the academy, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:
  - Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
  - Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents or the academy
  - Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the academy will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing.
- The school can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.
- The academy’s complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the parent teacher association or governing body cause any discrepancies through their conduct whilst using online messaging.
- The headteacher can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems quickly and effectively.
- Parents reporting on inappropriate social media content can do so ‘in confidence’ to the Headteacher or other school leader.
- The headteacher, in discussion with the Chair of Governors, can request that ‘group chats’ are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

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## 9.10. Site blocking

- 9.1 All social networking sites are blocked for use by the pupils. The school use Microsoft TEAMS as an extension of classrooms.
- 9.2 Attempts to circumvent the network’s firewalls will result in a ban from using school computing equipment, other than with close supervision.
- 9.3 Inappropriate content which is accessed on the school computers should be reported to the headteacher so that the site can be blocked.
- 9.4 Requests may be made to access erroneously blocked content by request to the school office.
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## 10.11. Cyber-bullying

