

Howden School



Policy Document

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Written in 2022 by:	
Assistant Headteacher- Behaviour, Attendance and Safeguarding	
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1. Statement of intent

Howden School understands 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.

We are committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, parents and pupils in support of the school's mission, values and objectives.
- Protecting our pupils from the dangers of social media.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyberbullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Providing e-safety information for young learners, parents and carers.

2. Legal framework

2.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2018) 'Data protection: a toolkit for schools'
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

2.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents
- Technology Acceptable Use Agreement – Staff
- Online Safety Guidance
- Data Protection Policy
- External Complaints Procedures Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreement
- TCAT Code of Conduct
- Data and Cyber-Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan
- TCAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Behavioural Policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Assistant Headteacher of Behaviour, Attendance and Safeguarding is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities in relation to social media use.
- Promoting safer working practices and standards with regards to the use of social media.
- Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including against any of the protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
- In conjunction with the governing board, handling complaints regarding this policy and its provisions in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Implementing appropriate sanctions and disciplinary methods where there is a breach of this policy.
- Taking steps to minimise the amount of misplaced or malicious allegations in relation to social media use.
- Working alongside the online safety officer and data protection officer (DPO) to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR.

3.2 The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.
- Ensuring their own knowledge of online safety issues is up-to-date.
- Discussion with DSL that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction.

3.3 Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Technology Acceptable Use Agreement – Staff.
- Ensuring pupils adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and that it is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
- Reporting any social media misuse by staff, pupils or parents to the AHT of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding (DSL) immediately.
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the school.

3.4 Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Supporting the principles outlined in this policy.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and the influence on their children at home.
- Promoting safe social media behaviour for both themselves and their children.
- Understanding content of online safety provided by the school wherever possible.
- Not engaging in activities involving social media which might bring the school into disrepute.
- Not representing their personal views as those of the school on any social medium.
- Acting in the best interests of pupils when creating, participating in or contributing to social media sites.

3.5 Young people are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring they understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online.
- Seeking help from school staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced online.
- Reporting online safety incidents and concerns in line with the procedures within this policy.
- Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.

3.6 ICT technicians are responsible for:

- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the school's social media accounts.
- Implementing appropriate security measures as directed by the headteacher and Trust.
- Ensuring that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are updated as appropriate.

4. Definitions

4.1 For the purpose of this policy, the school defines "**social media**" as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, such as NetMums and Reddit
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Vimeo
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter

4.2 For the purpose of this policy, "**cyberbullying**" is defined as any social media or communication technology intentionally used to bully an individual or group, including the posting or sharing of messages, images or videos.

4.3 For the purpose of this policy, "**members of the school community**" are defined as any teacher, member of support staff, young learner, parent/carer of a young person, governor or ex-pupil.

5. Data protection principles

5.1 The school will obtain consent from young learners and parents at the beginning of each academic year, which will confirm whether or not consent is given for posting images and videos of a pupil on social media platforms. The consent will be valid for the entire academic year. Consent provided for the use of images and videos only applies to school accounts – staff, young learners and parents/carers are not permitted to post any imagery or videos on personal accounts.

5.2 A record of consent is maintained throughout the academic year, which details the young person for whom consent has been provided. The DPO is responsible for ensuring this consent record remains up-to-date.

5.3 Parents and pupils are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents/carers and the young learner must inform the school in writing.

5.4 Consent can be provided for certain principles only, for example only images of a pupil are permitted to be posted, and not videos. This will be made explicitly clear on the consent from provided. The school will only post images and videos of pupils for whom consent has been received.

5.5 Only school-owned devices will be used to take images and videos of the school community, which have been pre-approved by the operational manager for use.

5.6 When posting images and videos of pupils, the school will apply data minimisation techniques, such as pseudonymisation (blurring a photograph), to reduce the risk of a pupil being identified.

5.7 The school will not post pupils' personal details on social media platforms and pupils' full names will never be used alongside any videos or images in which they are present.

5.8 Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Refer to the consent record log to ensure consent has been received for that pupil and for the exact processing activities required.
- Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a pupil.

5.9 Any breaches of the data protection principles will be handled in accordance with the Academies Data Protection Policy.

6. Staff social media use

School accounts

6.1 The school's social media sites will only be created and monitored by the operational manager and other designated staff members. There will be a strong pedagogical or business reason for the creation of social media accounts on behalf of the school; official school profiles and accounts will not be created for trivial reasons.

6.2 If members of staff wish to create a new social media account, they will seek approval from the Operational Manager, who will approve it with the headteacher and then create the account on the behalf of the requesting individuals. The Operational Manager will be consulted about the purpose of the proposed site and its content.

6.3 A school social media account will be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by staff members and will be linked to an official school email account.

6.4 Consideration will be given to the following aspects:

- The purpose for using social media
- Whether the overall investment will achieve the pedagogical aim
- The level of interactive engagement with the site
- Whether young learners, staff, parents/carers or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account
- How much time and effort staff members are willing to commit to the proposed site
- A clear plan which outlines aspects such as how long the site will last
- How the success of the site will be evaluated

6.5 School social media passwords are authorised by the Operational Manager – these are not shared with any unauthorised persons, including young learners, unless otherwise permitted by the

headteacher. Staff will adhere to the data protection principles outlined in section 5 of this policy at all times.

6.6 Staff will ensure any posts are positive in nature and relevant to the young learners, the work of staff, the school or any achievements. Staff will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or young learners.

6.7 All content expressed on school social media accounts will not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.

6.8 Staff will ensure the Operational Manager, or in the case of a delegated account, the account leader, has checked the content before anything is posted on social media.

6.9 If staff wish for reminders to be posted for parents, e.g. returning slips for a school trip, staff will seek permission from the Operational Manager before anything is posted.

6.10 If inappropriate content is accessed online, a report will be completed and passed on to the Operational Manager and AHT. The AHT and Operational Manager retains the right to monitor staff members' internet usage in line with the Data and Cyber-security Breach Prevention and Management Plan.

Personal accounts

6.11 Staff members will not access social media platforms during lesson times, but they are permitted to use social media during break times, lunch and PPA. Staff will avoid using social media in front of pupils.

6.12 Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts, unless it is beneficial to the material being taught – prior permission will be sought from the AHT Behaviour, Attendance and Safeguarding (DSL).

6.13 Staff are not permitted to use the school's WiFi network to access personal accounts, unless otherwise permitted by the AHT.

6.14 Staff will not 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact pupils or parents through their personal social media accounts. If pupils or parents attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member, they will report this to the DSL.

6.15 Staff members will not provide their home address, phone number, mobile number, social networking details or email addresses to pupils or parents/carers – any contact with young learners or parents/carers will be done through authorised school contact channels.

6.16 Staff members will use their school email address for school business and personal email address for their private correspondence; the two should not be mixed.

6.17 Staff members will ensure the necessary privacy controls are applied to personal accounts and will avoid identifying themselves as an employee of Howden School on their personal social media accounts.

6.18 Where staff members use social media in a personal capacity, they will ensure it is clear that views are personal and are not those of the school.

6.19 No staff member will post any content online that is damaging to the school or any of its staff or young learners. Staff members will not post any information which could identify a young learner, class or the school – this includes any images, videos and personal information.

6.20 Staff will not take any posts, images or videos from social media that belong to the school for their own personal use.

6.21 Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

6.22 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.

6.23 Members of staff will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.

6.24 Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community via social media by members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

6.25 Social media will not be used as a platform to attack, insult, abuse or defame young learners, their family members, colleagues or other professionals.

6.26 Staff members' personal information will not be discussed on social media.

7. Parent/ Carer social media use

7.1 Parents/carers are able to comment on or respond to information shared via social media sites; however, parents/carers should do so in a way which does not damage the reputation of the school.

7.2 Parents/carers will be asked not to share any photos or personal details of young learners when commenting on school social media sites, nor post comments concerning other young people or staff members, in accordance with the School expectations and Code of Conduct for Parents.

7.3 Any parents that are seen to be breaching the guidance in this policy will be required to attend a meeting with the headteacher, and may have their ability to interact with the social media websites removed.

7.4 Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution.

8. Young Learner social media use

8.1 Young learners will not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity.

8.2 Young learners are not permitted to use the school's WiFi network to access any social media platforms unless prior permission has been obtained.

8.3 Young learners will not attempt to 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts.

8.4 Young learners are only permitted to be affiliates of school social media accounts. Where a young learner or parent attempts to “friend” or ‘follow’ a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the DSL.

8.5 Young learners will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or young people.

8.6 Young learners will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

8.7 Young learners are instructed not to sign up to any social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil’s age.

8.8 If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, it will be reported to a teacher.

8.9 Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to suspension or exclusion.

9. Online safety

9.1 Any disclosures made by young learners to staff about online abuse, harassment or exploitation, whether they are the victim or disclosing on behalf of another child, will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

9.2 Concerns regarding a staff member’s online behaviour will be reported to the headteacher or DSL, who will decide on the best course of action in line with the relevant policies, e.g. TCAT Code of Conduct, Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy, and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. If the concern is about the headteacher, it will be reported to the DSL or chair of governors.

9.3 Concerns regarding a young learners online behaviour will be reported to the DSL, who will investigate any concerns with relevant staff members, e.g. the headteacher and ICT technicians, and manage concerns in accordance with relevant policies depending on their nature, e.g. the Behavioural Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9.4 Where there is a concern that illegal activity has taken place, the DSL / headteacher will contact the police. The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising pupils, e.g. calling the police, where criminal behaviour is thought to be inadvertent and as a result of ignorance or normal developmental curiosity, e.g. a pupil has taken and distributed indecent imagery of themselves. The DSL will decide in which cases this response is appropriate and will manage such cases in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Blocked content

10.1 In accordance with the school’s Data Protection Policy, the IT department will install firewalls on the school’s network to prevent access to certain websites. The following social media websites are not accessible on the school’s network:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram

10.2 The AHT for behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and Operational Manager retains the right to monitor staff and young people's access to websites when using the school's network and on school-owned devices.

10.3 Attempts made to circumvent the network's firewalls will result in a ban from using school computing equipment, other than with close supervision.

10.4 Inappropriate content accessed on the school's computers will be reported to the senior ICT officer so that the site can be blocked. Requests may be made to access erroneously blocked content by submitting a blocked content access form (appendix 1) to the Operational Manager, which will be approved by the AHT.

11. Cyberbullying

11.1 Cyberbullying incidents are taken seriously at Howden School. Any reports of cyberbullying on social media platforms by young people will be handled in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy.

11.2 Cyberbullying against young learners or staff is not tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with quickly and effectively wherever they occur in line with the Anti-bullying Policy.

11.3 Allegations of cyberbullying from staff members will be handled in accordance with the TCAT Code of Conduct Policy and Disciplinary Policy.

11.4 Staff members will not respond or retaliate to cyber bullying incidents. Incidents will be reported as inappropriate, and support will be sought from the Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour, attendance and safeguarding (DSL) and/or Headteacher.

11.5 Evidence from the incident will be saved, including screen prints of messages or web pages, and the time and date of the incident.

11.6 Where the perpetrator is a current person or colleague, most incidents can be handled through the Schools own disciplinary procedures.

11.7 Where the perpetrator is an adult, in nearly all cases, a member of the SLT will invite the victim to a meeting to address their concerns. Where appropriate, the perpetrator will be asked to remove the offensive content.

11.8 If the perpetrator refuses to comply, it is up to the School to decide what to do next. This could include contacting the internet service provider in question through their reporting mechanisms, if the offensive content breaches their terms and conditions.

11.9 If the material is threatening, abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitutes a hate crime, the School will consider whether the police should be contacted.

11.10 As part of the Schools ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of ICT lessons, PSHE, the tutor programme and safeguarding focus weeks.

12. Training

12.1 The school recognises that early intervention can protect young learners who may be at risk of cyberbullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

12.2 Teachers and support staff will receive training on social media as part of their new starter induction.

12.3 Teachers and support staff will receive ongoing training as part of their development through regular briefing, half termly safeguarding focus and annual online safety training.

12.4 Young Learners will be educated about online safety and appropriate social media use through a variety of mediums, including assemblies, PSHE lessons, cross-curricular links, tutoring programme and the half termly safeguarding focus. Young learners will be provided with material to reinforce their knowledge.

12.5 Online safety and social media information will be shared with parents and carers providing relevant resources, such as our Online safety guidance found on the school website and communicated within the safeguarding focus sessions.

12.6 Training for all young learners, staff and parents will be refreshed in light of any significant incidents or changes.

13. Monitoring and review

13.1 This policy will be reviewed on a two-year basis by the AHT of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, in conjunction with the operational manager.

13.2 The next scheduled review date for this policy is April 2024.

13.3 Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, young learners and parents/carers.

Blocked content access request form

Requester	
Staff name:	
Date:	
Full URL:	
Site content:	
Reasons for access:	
Identified risks and control measures:	
Authoriser	
Approved?	✓ / X
Reasons:	
Staff name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

