Cherry Tree Academy Social Media Policy

Social media

Cherry Tree Academy's Social Media presence

Cherry Tree Academy (CTA) works on the principle that if we don't manage our social media reputation, someone else will.

Online Reputation Management (ORM) is about understanding and managing our digital footprint (everything that can be seen or read about the school online).

Negative coverage almost always causes some level of disruption. Up to half of all cases dealt with by the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk) involve schools' (and staff members') online reputation.

Accordingly, we manage and monitor our social media footprint carefully to know what is being said about our school and to respond to criticism and praise in a fair, responsible manner.

The Headteacher (Mr Dawson), supported by the Senior Leadership Team and designated staff, are responsible for managing our school:

- Twitter - https://twitter.com/CherryTree_SCH

as well as checking our Wikipedia and Google reviews. They follow the guidance in the LGfL/Safer Internet Centre online-reputation management document here.

Staff, pupils' and parents' Social Media presence

CTA Social Media accounts will be used principally to be followed/liked by parents, and other professionals, in order to advertise the excellent work by staff, pupils, parents and the Academy Standards Committee. Similarly, it will also contain information detailing special events and news in school. While we do of course prioritise face-to-face communication with parents, the aim of the Social Media accounts is to run alongside more traditional methods and not to replace them.

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, as stated in the acceptable use policies which all members of the school community sign, 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.

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.

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 and this can be accessed on the school and Trust website, under the 'Policies' tab. Sharing complaints on social media is unlikely to help resolve the matter, but can cause upset to staff, pupils and parents, also undermining staff morale and the reputation of the school (which is important for the pupils we serve).

Many social media platforms have a minimum age of 13 (note that WhatsApp is 16+), but the school regularly deals 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. It is worth noting that Online Harms regulation is likely to require more stringent age verification measures over the coming years.

However, the school has to strike a difficult balance of not encouraging underage use at the same time as needing to acknowledge reality in order to best help our pupils/students to avoid or cope with 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 from adults.

Parents can best support this by talking to their children about the apps, sites and games they use (you don't need to know them – ask your child to explain it to you), with whom, for how long, and when (late at night / in bedrooms is not helpful for a good night's sleep and productive teaching and learning at school the next day). You may wish to use the [Digital Family Agreement](#) with example statements to help families agree on shared expectations around time spent on devices, and ground rules like no phones at the table or in the bedroom at night-time, and refer to the [Top Tips for Parents](#) poster along with tips around parental controls, settings, apps and games, and introduce the [Children's Commission Digital 5 A Day](#) – all available at [parentsafe.lgfl.net](#).

The school has one official social media accounts:

- Twitter - https://twitter.com/CherryTree_SCH

which are managed by the Headteacher (Mr Dawson), supported by the Senior Leadership Team and designated staff. They will respond to general enquiries about the school whenever possible, but ask parents/carers not to use these channels to communicate about their children or as a guaranteed communication method. Our school social media accounts complement our existing communication methods e.g. text message and via the My Child at School app; email is the official electronic communication channel between parents and the school.

The private messenger option has been disabled on both school accounts to prevent private discussions.

Pupils are not allowed* to be 'friends' with or make a friend request** to any staff, governors, volunteers and contractors or otherwise communicate via social media.

Pupils are discouraged from 'following' staff, governor, volunteer or contractor public accounts (e.g. following a someone 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). In the reverse situation, however, staff must not follow such public student accounts. CTA asks all staff to ensure their own personal and private social media accounts are set to private to ensure Safer Working Practices are followed and used to protect all members of the school community.

Exceptions may be made, e.g. for pre-existing family links, but these must be approved by the Headteacher/Principal, and should be declared upon entry of the pupil or staff member to the school).

*** Any attempt to do so may be a safeguarding concern or disciplinary matter and should be notified to the DSL (if by a child) or to the Headteacher (if by a staff member).*

Furthermore, 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 school or its stakeholders on social media and be careful that their personal opinions might not be attributed to the school, trust or local authority, bringing the school into disrepute.

The serious consequences of inappropriate behaviour on social media are underlined by the fact that during the last 5 years, there have been 263 Prohibition Orders issued by the Teacher Regulation Agency to teaching staff that involved misuse of social media/technology.

All members of the school community are reminded that particularly in the context of social media, it is important to comply with the Trust policy on Digital Images and Video (photography) and permission is sought before uploading photographs, videos or any other information about other people.

The statements of the Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) which all members of the school community have signed are also relevant to social media activity, as is the school's Data Protection Policy – see Waterton Academy Trust [policy page.](#)

Who can follow/like the CTA Social Media Accounts?

At present, the CTA Social Media accounts are open to all followers; however, we reserve the right to block accounts deemed inappropriate, or offensive, to ourselves and/or others.

Under no circumstances, should staff members follow the CTA Social Media accounts from their own personal Social Media accounts.

Social Media Policy
for Schools

Who will the CTA Social Media Pages like or follow?

In order to protect ourselves, from inappropriate content, being distributed into our posts, the CTA social media accounts will not actively seek to like or follow other users; we will not request to be a friend or follow any individual, including parents. However, exceptions may be made, where 'liking' or 'following' another user, has obvious benefits to the school, for example Wakefield Libraries, Wakefield Music Hubs or other Waterton schools etc.

Once again, these will be decided, on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the SLT. CTA sees itself more as a distributor of information, to those who follow it, and not as a receiver of information.

Social media incidents

Breaches of this policy and of school AUPs (Acceptable Use Policies) will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy (for pupils) or code of conduct/handbook (for staff).

Further to this, where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the school community, CTA will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly.

What is inappropriate content and referencing and how will it be dealt with?

CTA welcomes any referencing, mentions, or interactions, which portray the school in a positive light only. Therefore, we deem any of the following, as inappropriate:

- Offensive language, or remarks, aimed at the school, its staff, parents, Academy Council or others affiliated with the school.
- Unsuitable images or content posted into its feed.
- Unsuitable images, or content, finding its way from another's account, into the schools' feeds.
- Images or text that infringe upon copyright.
- Comments that aim to undermine the school, its staff, parents, Academy Standards Committee or others affiliated with the school.

Any inappropriate content will be deleted from the school accounts and its users will be removed, blocked, and, depending on the nature of the comment, reported to Twitter and/or Facebook.

Where an offending post has been made by a third party, the school may report it to the platform where it is hosted, and may contact the Professionals' Online Safety Helpline, POSH (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.

Extremism

The school has obligations relating to radicalisation and all forms of extremism under the Prevent Duty, as outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy. Staff will not support or promote extremist organisations,

messages or individuals, give them a voice or opportunity to visit the school, nor browse, download or send material that is considered offensive or of an extremist nature. We ask for parents' support in this also, especially relating to social media, where extremism and hate speech can be widespread on certain platforms.

Further questions

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

Staff should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Senior Leader in the first instance, who may then call on the expertise of Waterton Academy Trust IT Manager, LGfL DigiSafe or Professionals' Online-Safety Helpline (from UK SIC).

Twitter's own policies regarding safety rules and violations can be read on:
https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security

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