Social Media
September 2025

Policy Title:	Social Media
Policy Reference:	SA / Staff / Students / Parents
Description:	This document outlines the appropriate use of social media for all members of the Sandwell Academy community
Status:	Statutory
Category:	Academy
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Other relevant SA polices:	• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy • Behaviour policy • Disciplinary & Capability Policy • ICT and Internet acceptable use policy • Online Safety Policy • Mobile phone policy • Staff code of conduct policy • Parent code of conduct policy
Approved by the TTMAT Board on:	
Date for Review:	

Change Record		
Version	Date	Description

Contents

1. Purpose and scope

This policy outlines the appropriate use of social media for all members of the Sandwell Academy community. Our aim is to promote the positive use of social platforms to showcase achievements, share key information, and engage with the wider community while ensuring safety, professionalism, and mutual respect.

This policy aims to:

- Set guidelines and rules on the use of school's social media channels
- Establish clear expectations for the way members of the school community engage with each other online
- Support the school's policies on data protection, online safety and safeguarding

Staff, students and parents/ carers are required to read, understand and comply with this social media policy.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school/working hours or otherwise.

It applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using:

- School IT facilities and equipment
- Equipment belonging to members of staff and pupils
- Any other IT/Internet-enabled equipment

All members of the school should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, harassment, child protection, safer recruitment, and online safety and ICT acceptable use policies.

1.1 Definition of social media

For the purposes of this document, 'social media' is considered to include all technologies that allow individuals to communicate and share information (including photos and video). This includes group messaging services such as WhatsApp.

2. Use of official school social media

The school's official social media channels are as follows:

- **Facebook:** @SandwellAcademy
- **Instagram:** @SandwellAcademy
- **X (Twitter):** @SandwellAcademy
- **LinkedIn:** Sandwell Academy

These platforms are used to:

- Celebrate student and staff achievements
- Share academic, enrichment, and event updates
- Provide community information and reminders
- Foster positive engagement with parents/carers and the public

These accounts are managed by **Tyler Bevin** and overseen by **Cairon Morris-Ashman** and **Sukjinder Gill**. Staff members who have not been authorised by **Sukjinder Gill** to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.

If you have suggestions for something you'd like to appear on our school social media channel(s), please speak to **Tyler Bevin** (tbevin@sandwellacademy.com), Cairon Morris-Ashman (cmorris-ashman@sandwellacademy.com) or **Sukjinder Gill** (sgill@sandwellacademy.com).

2.1 Facebook

The school will post on Facebook:

- Alerts about changes (e.g., changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)
- Reminders (e.g., approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- Weekly Themes (Monday Motivation, Monday star staff/student, Tuesday Trivia, Wednesday Wellbeing, Thursday Throwback and Friday Alumni)
- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school **will not** post on Facebook:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people
- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

2.2 Instagram

The school will post on Instagram:

- Alerts about changes (e.g., changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)

- Reminders (e.g., approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school **will not** post on Instagram:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people
- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

2.3 X (formerly Twitter)

The school will post on X:

- Alerts about changes (e.g., changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)
- Reminders (e.g., approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school **will not** post on X:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people
- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

2.4 LinkedIn

The school will post on LinkedIn:

- Advertisements for school events or activities

- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for business/networking partners
- Achievements of pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school **will not** post on LinkedIn:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people
- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

2.5 Moderation

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will delete as soon as reasonably possible:

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments
- Comments we consider to be spam
- Personal information, such as telephone numbers, address details, etc.
- Posts that advertise commercial activity or ask for donations

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users, following the school's complaints policy. If users are repeatedly abusive or inappropriate, they will be blocked.

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will also ensure that all content shared on social media platforms is age appropriate for the school community.

2.6 Following other social media users

The school:

- Will only 'like' Facebook pages with a non-commercial interest - being 'liked' by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind.

- May follow other users if you follow us on X (formerly Twitter) - being followed by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind.

3. Personal use of social media by staff

Please note: While we recommend members of staff make their private social media profiles unidentifiable to pupils, we understand many staff will use sites such as X (formerly Twitter) or LinkedIn for professional purposes.

The school expects all staff (including governors and volunteers) to consider the safety of pupils and the risks (reputational and financial) to the school when using social media channels, including when doing so in a personal capacity. Staff are also responsible for

checking and maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts.

Staff members will report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

Expectations for Staff

- Staff must not accept or request current students as friends/followers on personal accounts.
- All posts on Academy accounts must be professional, respectful, and in line with safeguarding and GDPR policies.
- Photos or names of students must not be posted without prior parental/ carer consent.
- Any use of personal social media must not bring the Academy into disrepute.
- Only authorised personnel may post from official Academy accounts.

When using social media, staff **must not**:

- Use personal accounts to conduct school business
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, pupils past or present
- Complain about the school, individual pupils, colleagues or parents/ carers
- Reference or share information about individual pupils, colleagues or parents/ carers
- Post images of pupils
- Express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school
- Link their social media profile to their work email account
- Use personal social media during timetabled teaching time except in a professional capacity

Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the Academy's Disciplinary and Capability policy.

Any communication received from current pupils (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.

Staff should not have contact via personal accounts with past pupils (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using via official school channels).

3.1 WhatsApp groups

- We expect staff to follow the above social media guidelines when using team WhatsApp groups.

4. Personal use of social media by pupils

The school encourages pupils to

- Be respectful to members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful to other pupils and parents/ carers
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they

can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

Expectations for Students

- Students must not impersonate, create parody accounts, or post misleading content related to Sandwell Academy or staff/students.
- Use of social media to bully, harass, or intimidate others (on or off-site) will result in disciplinary action.
- Students should not record, post, or distribute content from within the Academy premises without permission.
- Any social media activity should reflect the Academy's values of Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity.

Pupils **should not** use social media to:
- Complain about individual members of staff
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other pupils or parents/ carers
- Post images of other pupils without their permission
- Any concerns about a pupil's social media use will be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy.

4.1 WhatsApp groups

- We expect students to follow the above social media guidelines when using WhatsApp groups.

5. Personal use of social media by parents/ carers

The school expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our pupils.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:
- Be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times
- Be respectful of, and about, other parents/ carers and other pupils and children
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

Expectations for Parents / Carers

- We encourage parents/carers to follow our official channels to stay informed.
- Concerns or complaints should be raised through official school channels (email, phone, in person) and **not** via public posts.
- Avoid tagging or sharing photos of other students without permission from their parent/carer.

Parents/ carers **should not** use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/ carers or pupils
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/ carers or pupils
- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents
- Post images of children other than their own

5.1 WhatsApp groups

We expect parents/carers to follow the above social media guidelines when using class WhatsApp groups.

6. Reporting Inappropriate Use

Any misuse of social media relating to Sandwell Academy should be reported immediately to a member of staff or via email to: safeguarding@sandwellacademy.com

This includes:

- Inappropriate posts/images
- Cyberbullying incidents
- Breach of confidentiality or safeguarding

7. Safeguarding and Data Protection

- The Academy complies with UK GDPR and safeguarding standards in all online interactions.
- Student data and personal details will never be shared without explicit consent.

8. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually and may be updated at any time to reflect best practices, legislation, or changes in Academy procedures. All users are expected to stay informed of current guidelines.

9. Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Disciplinary & Capability Policy
- ICT and Internet acceptable use policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Mobile phone policy
- Staff code of conduct policy
- Parent code of conduct policy