Social Media Policy for Staff

Ffederasiwn Ysgolion **Llanidloes** Schools Federation

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The purpose of this policy

Social media is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. This policy covers all social media tools including blogs and multimedia sharing sites (YouTube and Instagram for example).

This policy aims to harness the communication benefits of social media, whilst providing guidelines and protection for all staff at Llanidloes Schools' Federation.

This policy cannot protect members of staff against all risks associated with engaging with social media tools. Common sense must still be used at all times.

Legislation

Staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation.

Using social networking for communicating with the public (including learners)

Social media tools present unique opportunities for sharing information and communicating with the public in 'real time'. Where staff require the use of social networking for work purposes (other than via Hwb or Microsoft Teams), they should seek permission from the headteacher.

Social media enables people to express opinions and share information as part of a globally distributed conversation. Each tool and medium has proper and inappropriate uses. The following must be followed in use of social media:

Keep it professional: don't use your personal (i.e. out-of-work) profile to communicate with parents about school issues. Instead, use the appropriate corporate, professional profile or service area account.

- Don't use work email for private emails
- Don't use your work X (Twitter) (or equivalent) for personal (or unrelated) tweets
- Don't use your personal Facebook (or equivalent) to communicate about school issues

Staff should at all times behave professionally and courteously while using social media and consider the implications of the content they create and share.

Use of images: if including photographs on your personal social network site, do not include photographs of staff or learners or their personal details without first seeking their permission.

Keep it current: the schools' social media platforms are updated regularly and feed is monitored on a daily (weekday) basis.

Handle offensive comments swiftly: we will remove unreasonably offensive, defamatory or libelous comments from other users, inform users via a statement such as: “This comment was removed because moderators found the content offensive. I will respond to your comments but please respect the views of everybody who comes here.”

Stay within your subject area: schools should comment on their own school only.

Adopt the right tone: whilst there is a need to remain professional at all times, an informal, conversational tone is the most appropriate for social media channels. If you are using interaction tools to respond (i.e. wall, comments), ensure you are calm and courteous. Be prepared for a two-way conversation and be aware that people are entitled to their views. You must make sure that what you say is factual and avoid unnecessary or unproductive arguments.

Always adopt the corporate stance: make it clear that what you say there is representative of your views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of Llanidloes Schools’ Federation. For instance, in your own blog, the following standard disclaimer should be prominently displayed: "The views and opinions expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent those of Llanidloes Schools’ Federation". In summary, do not make any statements that contradict or undermine school policy.

When using digital media for work purposes you must use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for Llanidloes High School or Llanidloes Primary School.

Llanidloes High School’s social media activity

We will use X (Twitter) (and equivalent platforms) to promote the school and to share the great work of learners and teachers with existing and potential parents, learners and the wider community.

Not only do platforms like X (Twitter) give us an additional channel through which to disseminate news and information but they also provide a way to convey the ethos and culture of the school. And, if done well, it will help contribute to fostering a sense of pride amongst current learners.

Please do let us know about any successes, news or interesting projects that we may be able to share. We will of course be sensitive to confidentiality and privacy issues.

Llanidloes Primary School’s social media activity

We will use the Ysgol Gynradd Llanidloes Facebook page to promote the school and to advertise local activities that may interest children and their families.

Using social networking for personal use

Llanidloes School logos should not be used by individuals on their personal web pages or social networking pages.

You must not disclose or use Llanidloes Schools' Federation confidential or proprietary information or that of any other person or company in any on-line social computing platform.

We would not expect you to become "friends" with learners except when using school or department social networks for work purposes.

Staff should be aware of their association and responsibilities to Llanidloes Schools' Federation and ensure that their profiles and related content are consistent with how they would wish to present themselves and the professional conduct expectations of the EWC.

Where staff feel they are being pestered by, or targeted by, other staff, this may constitute a disciplinary matter and should be raised by the member of staff with their line manager as early as possible.

If including school photographs on your personal social network site, do not include photographs of staff or learners or their personal details.

Employees must not use social networking sites to attack, abuse or discuss colleagues or learners (including their parents) of Llanidloes Schools' Federation.

Use of personal mobile devices at work

Schools staff should be aware of the example they set learners in the use of mobile devices and should not use personal devices or use school equipment for personal matters during learner-facing working time.

Abuse of the guidance

Llanidloes Schools' Federation does not discourage employees from using social media tools. However, all members of staff should be aware that the schools will take seriously any occasions where the tools are used inappropriately. Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the schools' Disciplinary Procedure and it is possible that this may be considered to constitute Gross Misconduct and could therefore lead to dismissal.