

# Chalfont Valley Academy Social Media Policy

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**This policy was reviewed by E-ACT on/by:**

Date:

Department(s):

**This policy was ratified/reviewed by Governors on:**

Date:

Date:

Date:

**Frequency of review: Every 1 year(s)**

Note: This document uses the most current Government information and guidance at the time of writing. It may change according to Government policy. Contact E-ACT Head Office with any questions.

**E-ACT**

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## Introduction

E-ACT and Chalfont Valley Academy know that social media and networking websites have become a regular part of everyday life and that many people and organisations enjoy membership of sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Social networking on behalf of Chalfont Valley Academy, whether that is on Twitter, Linked-in or schoolsnet, can provide fantastic, instant opportunities to share good news, best practice and to build relationships with key stakeholders.

Whilst a fantastic platform to market E-ACT and Chalfont Valley Academy there are risks inherent in using online social networking platforms. Care must always be taken not to breach E-ACT's confidentiality clauses set out in Employment Contracts and safeguarding policies, offend anyone, or damage the reputation or standards of E-ACT and Chalfont Valley Academy.

The following policy has been designed by E-ACT Head Office to give Chalfont Valley Academy and its stakeholders, including employees, students and Governors, clear guidance as to what E-ACT expects of them when accessing and using social media platforms as an E-ACT Academy or Free School. It is not mandatory or statutory for an academy or Free School to follow.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- The reputation of Chalfont Valley Academy and E-ACT is promoted correctly and positively and that both reputations are not adversely affected by the use of social media platforms;
- Chalfont Valley Academy and E-ACT is not exposed to legal defamation;
- Employees and students at Chalfont Valley Academy are protected;
- Users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social media applications is legitimately representative of Chalfont Valley Academy.

Please note that the absence of, or lack of, explicit reference to a specific website or service does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. Where no policy or guidelines exist, employees should use their professional judgement. Contact E-ACT Head Office if you are uncertain.

All Chalfont Valley Academy stakeholders must operate within the Chalfont Valley Equality and Diversity Policy.

Social media and networking websites include, but are not limited to:

- Collaborative spaces such as Facebook;
- Media sharing services such as YouTube and Tumblr;
- Linked-in;
- Blogs;
- Micro-blogs such as Twitter;
- Online discussion forums, such as mumsnet and schoolsnet.

## Guidance for official Academy or Free School accounts

All proposals for using social media networking websites applications as part of the Chalfont Valley Academy, whether hosted by the Chalfont Valley Academy or by a third party, must be approved by a delegated person of authority within the Chalfont Valley Academy, the Principal for example. The use of a social media platform should be part of a wider marketing strategy, with specific objectives set for a social media strategy, with clear measurable key performance indicators to ensure the strategy is working for Chalfont Valley Academy's audience. The tone of social media marketing should be organisational, representing Chalfont Valley Academy and not personal.

Chalfont Valley Academy representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social media and networking websites applications by all Chalfont Valley Academy representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications – such as open discussion forums – and internally-facing uses – such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on Chalfont Valley Academy network or not.

Where applications or websites allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Chalfont Valley Academy expects that users of social media and networking websites will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

## Terms of Use

- An official account on a social media or networking website may only be set-up with written consent from a delegated person of authority within the Chalfont Valley Academy
- Only authorised administrators may access the account;
- All information published must comply with Chalfont Valley Academy confidentiality clauses set out in Employment Contracts and be in line with data protection laws and other relevant policies;
- Students, families and carers should not be referenced online without their express consent unless it is the duplication of an image or news article that has already been signed off;
- Any employee who becomes aware of social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful should make their manager aware as soon as possible;
- Social media and networking websites applications:
  - Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring Chalfont Valley Academy into disrepute;
  - Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner;
  - Must not breach the academy's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies;
  - Must not be used to discuss or advise on any matters relating to private or confidential matters regarding the Chalfont Valley Academy, including staff, students or students and their families and carers.
  - Must not use photographs of students whose parents/ carers have not signed a photograph permission form.
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend'/ contact on a social media platform;
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of Chalfont Valley Academy on their personal account;
- Employees should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

Also, use of social media and networking websites applications during Chalfont Valley Academy for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by a delegated person of authority within the Chalfont Valley Academy.

## Guidance and protection for employees using social media and networking websites for personal use

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the academy on social networking sites;
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the academy on social networking sites who is under the age of 18;
- This means that no member of the academy staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend;
- Where family and friends have pupils in academy and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on academy equipment;
- It is illegal for an adult to network, falsely, as a child on social media platforms.

Stakeholders to Chalfont Valley Academy should also be mindful of using their personal social media accounts to discuss work and colleagues. Many people have personal accounts that they use to comment on their own life but note in biographies where they work. Responsible social media usage should be best practise across all professional and personal accounts when communicating about Chalfont Valley Academy.

## Related Policies

- Term and Conditions of Employment Contract
- Safeguarding Policy (appendix with E-ACT's Health and Safety Policy)
- Equality and Diversity Policy (appendix of equality Policy, including Race and Disability)
- Anti-Bullying Policy

All documents are available upon request.

Last updated: May 2013

This policy was <input type="checkbox"/> ratified <input type="checkbox"/> reviewed (tick one) by the Local Governing Body on (date).	
Signed, Chair of Governors	Date
Print name	