



Communication and Social Media Policy

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Agreed by:	Alexandra Marshall

Communication

1 Policy statement

1.1 Lake Haven is committed to the promotion of effective communication between pupils, members of staff, parents/carers, stakeholders, our school communities and beyond.

1.2 Our objectives are to:

1.2.2 Have a clear and professional communication strategy in place which will help Lake Haven to keep parents/carers well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall well-being.

1.2.3 Make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination.

1.2.4 Be open, honest, ethical and professional using jargon-free, plain English which can be easily understood by everyone.

1.2.5 Ensure that there is a robust process in place for consultation between the schools parents, staff members and pupils on key issues and areas of development.

1.2.6 Ensure that the systems in place are fully aligned to Lake Haven's vision, mission and values.

1.2.7 Recognise that monitoring and evaluation of communication issues through regular meetings and discussion with pupils, staff and parents is an on-going consideration.

1.3 The following communication methods are used within Lake Haven:

1.3.1 Letters.

1.3.2 Email.

1.3.3 Websites.

1.3.4 Social Media.

1.3.5 Text Messages.

1.3.6 Newsletters.

1.3.7 Face to Face meetings.

1.4 Efficient and effective communication is essential at all levels of the School:

1.4.1 Between staff.

1.4.2 Between pupils.

1.4.3 Between Proprietors.

1.4.4 Between all stakeholders.

2 Responsibilities

Proprietors

2.1. To publish key policies, documents and procedures on the school websites and in other appropriate areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire community of Lake Haven

Schools

2.3. To inform parents/carers of all school events within appropriate timelines.

2.4. To keep parents/carers informed of the progress of their child at regular intervals throughout the school year.

2.5. To consult with and work in partnership with parents/carers on the well-being and education of their children.

2.6. To seek the views of the parents and children on their education and ensure that their ideas and feedback are always treated with respect and built into planning and development. (Eg regular circulation of Parent and Pupil questionnaires).

2.7. To seek creative ways of making key messages relevant to the communities served by Lake Haven

2.8. To remind Lake Haven's vision, mission and values.

Staff

2.9. To ensure that the principles and procedures of this policy are followed at all times.

2.10. To communicate proactively with parents/carers about pupil progress and to support parents/carers to help their child's learning.

2.11. To communicate effectively with colleagues across and beyond Lake Haven to ensure communication is clear, informative and understood.

2.12. To keep the school office up to date with any changes to contact details (address, phone numbers, email addresses).

Parents/Carers

- 2.13. To read key communications circulated by Lake Haven (eg website information, newsletters)
- 2.14. To respond/act on communications from the school (eg sign consent forms, attend meetings as required).
- 2.15. To keep the school office up to date with any changes to contact details (address, phone numbers, email addresses).
- 2.16. To inform the school of any medical conditions along with medical documentation.
- 2.17. To inform the school of any child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- 2.18. To raise any issues or concerns with the classteacher in the first instance

3 Internal Communication within Lake Haven

Communication with members of staff

- 3.1 A timetable is made available to staff, which outlines weekly activities across the school. In addition, daily updates are given through Friday briefings, regular meetings between staff, noticeboards, online alerts etc.
- 3.2 The Google Drive contains details of all procedures and policies.
- 3.3 Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff without their consent.

Email Communication for members of staff

- 3.5 All members of staff have their own Lake Haven email account and must ensure they use the official signature strip on all internal and external emails. The email signature must include name, position and school.
- 3.6 Staff must consider the best way to communicate according to each situation, recognising that in school, email should not be used as a substitute for face- to- face communication.
- 3.7 Staff must be mindful of the tone and propriety of their email communications and ensure that their written correspondence is always polite, appropriate and professional.
- 3.8 Lake Haven encourages staff to have an appropriate work/life balance, staff are not expected to write and respond to emails outside of school hours. It is expected though that emails are responded to within two school working days. If it is not possible to reply within two school days, this should

be communicated to the email sender and a likely response time provided.

3.9 To ensure effective management of emails, please be mindful of who emails are being sent 'To' and 'Cc' to. 'To' should be used for communicating to colleagues who you expect to respond or follow an instruction you have given. 'Cc' is helpful to use if the information will be directly useful to a colleague.

3.10 'Subject' information in emails should be clear. Requests for information should be titled 'Lake Haven Request for Information' followed by the subject of the request. Unless it is an emergency, a minimum of 5 working days should be given for the recipient to provide the information.

3.11 It would be inappropriate to discuss issues of a sensitive nature by email. Although not exhaustive, sensitive issues may include addressing staff performance or pupil performance and behaviour. Issues of this nature should be conducted in a face-to-face manner, with minutes taken as necessary. If email communication on a sensitive matter is necessary after a face-to-face discussion staff/pupil initials should be used.

3.12 Emails sent outside Lake Haven containing personal information should be encrypted.

3.13 Documents sent electronically outside Lake Haven to a third party should be password protected. The password should be sent under the cover of a separate email or communicated directly to the recipient(s). Documents should be sent under encrypted email.

3.14 Communicating with parents and staff members must be carried out via the school email address and not via a personal email address.

3.15 Engaging in personal correspondence with pupils is not allowed.

3.16 When responding to or forwarding an email, and copying in other people, please be mindful of previous emails in the chain. If necessary delete previous emails in the chain that are not appropriate.

3.17 Emails are not private documents and Lake Haven as the employer can request to see staff emails. Emails may also be subject to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Act.

Social Networking Sites and Blogs for members of staff and volunteers

3.18 Staff will not communicate with pupils or parents privately via social networking sites/personal accounts such as Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok etc. and all communications should be professional in nature.

3.19 Staff will not accept personal 'friend' requests from pupils or

parents.

3.20 School/class blogs may be set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning and will be carefully managed and monitored. Only official designated users may use social media on behalf of Lake Haven.

3.21 When using social media outside school for personal use, all staff and volunteers must remember that they are personally responsible. They must take care to ensure that they always act responsibly, follow the law, Lake Haven's Acceptable Use of ICT policy and the relevant code of conduct outside school as well as in school.

Communication with Pupils/Accessing 'the pupil voice'

3.23 Pupils' views are sought via lessons, discussion, pupil questionnaires.

4 External Communication

4.1 The communication of Lake Haven's moral purpose is achieved through:

4.1.1 Ensuring Lake Haven's vision, mission and values are constantly referenced.

4.1.2 Maintaining a frequently updated website.

4.1.3 Featuring in regular local and national press articles.

4.1.5 Networking and facilitating visits to our school.

Communication with the Media and Wider Public

4.1 When press coverage takes place, all parties who may be interested such as parents, staff, Proprietors and the community will be informed via email, social media, newsletters and school websites.

4.2 All publications and press releases which include pictures of pupils will be checked before release/ publication to ensure that they do not include any children whose parents have not given consent for their child to be photographed or filmed.

4.3 All publications and prospectuses will be mindful of the equal opportunities policy, reflecting and celebrating the diversity of Lake Haven's community.

4.4 The Head Teacher is authorised to provide press releases to the local press on 'Good news' items relating to school.

5 Communication of Recruitment Opportunities

5.1 A proactive approach is taken by Lake Haven to the recruitment of high quality

leaders, teachers, support staff and volunteers.

5.2 Internal vacancies are advertised solely on the school websites. The onus for checking this is on individual members of staff.

5.3 External advertising will be via Lake Haven's appointed recruitment methods and Social Media where appropriate.

6 General Data Protection Regulations 2018

6.1 All areas of this policy must comply with Lake Haven's policy and procedures on the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 Details of which can be found here:

www.lakehavenschool.co.uk

Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Lake Haven recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions, engage with the wider community and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, X, TikTok, BeReal, blogs, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, MySpace, Flickr, Youtube and wikis. However, staff use of social media can pose risks to confidential and proprietary information, and reputation, and can jeopardise compliance with legal obligations.

1.2 To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of productivity and to ensure that IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, Lake Haven expects staff to adhere to this policy, which outlines staff responsibilities when accessing and using social media websites.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may, after consultation with the recognised trade unions, be amended at any time by Lake Haven.

1.4 Any reference to Lake Haven also, by definition, includes reference to each department within the school.

2. Who is covered by the policy

2.1 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including full time and part-time staff, fixed-term staff, consultants, contractors, casual

and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

2.2 Third parties who have access to Lake Haven's electronic communication systems and equipment are also required to comply with this policy.

3. Scope and purpose of the policy

3.1 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including but not limited to: Facebook; LinkedIn; X; Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat; all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs. The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. Lake Haven has a separate policy regarding acceptable use of the Lake Haven's IT systems more generally and all staff should ensure that they read, understand and sign the Acceptable Use Policy in addition to this social media policy.

3.2 This policy applies to the use of social media for both work and personal purposes, whether during working hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using Lake Haven's IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.

3.3 The purpose of this policy is to encourage good practice; to protect Lake Haven, its staff and pupils; to clarify where and how existing policies and procedures apply to social media and to promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of Lake Haven's activities.

3.4 Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether Lake Haven's equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with Lake Haven's investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details. Lake Haven also reserves the right to suspend internet access where it deems it necessary during an investigation. When considering any potential breach of this policy, Lake Haven will consider the context of any social media posting.

3.5 Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

4. Responsible use of social media

4.1 The following sections of the policy provide staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

4.2 Protecting the Lake Haven's reputation:

- Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:
 - (i) Lake Haven;
 - (ii) its staff;
 - (iii) its pupils;
 - (iv) its suppliers and vendors; and
 - (v) other affiliates and stakeholders, but staff should also avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage Lake Haven's reputation, even indirectly.
- Unless expressly authorised to speak on behalf of Lake Haven, either using a Lake Haven social media account or otherwise, in accordance with section 8, staff should make it clear in social media postings that they are speaking on their own behalf. Staff should write in the first person and use a personal email address when communicating via social media.
- Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and Lake Haven would advise that all profiles are kept private and security features enabled. Staff should remember that what they publish might be available to be read by a wider audience (including Lake Haven itself, future employers and social acquaintances) for a long time. Staff should keep this in mind before posting content.
- If staff disclose their affiliation as an employee of Lake Haven, unless expressly authorised to speak on behalf of the school, either using the school's social media account or otherwise, in accordance with section 8, they must also state that their views do not represent those of their employer. For example, staff could state, "the views in this posting do not represent the views of my employer". Staff should also ensure that their profile and any content they post are consistent with the professional image they present to pupils, clients, and colleagues.
- Staff should avoid posting comments about sensitive business-related

topics, such as Lake Haven's performance. Even if staff make it clear that their views on such topics do not represent those of Lake Haven their comments could still damage the school's reputation or breach confidentiality obligations.

- If staff are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they should refrain from making the communication until they have discussed it with their line manager.
- If staff see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the school or its stakeholders, they should contact the Headteacher or other Senior Member of staff. All staff are responsible for protecting the school's reputation.
- Staff should use their school email addresses for the conduct of Lake Haven's business via social media. Use of private email addresses for Lake Haven's business is prohibited.

4.3 Respecting intellectual property and confidential information:

- Staff should not do anything to jeopardise Lake Haven's security, confidentiality and intellectual property through the use of social media.
- In addition, staff should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other organisations and individuals, which can create liability for Lake Haven, as well as the individual author.
- Staff must not use the Lake Haven's logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks in any social media post, or post any of the school's confidential information without prior written permission from the Data Protection Officer.
- To protect themselves and Lake Haven against liability for copyright infringement, where appropriate, staff should reference sources of particular information they post or upload and cite them accurately. If staff have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark, they should seek advice from the Data Protection Officer - Alex Marshall.

4.4 Respecting colleagues, pupils, clients, partners and suppliers:

- Staff must not post anything that their colleagues or the school's

pupils, clients, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders would find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenities.

- Staff must not post anything (e.g. comments or images) related to their colleagues, or the school's pupils, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders without their (an owner's) prior written permission.

5. Personnel responsible for implementing the policy

5.1 Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks also lies with the Head Teacher.

5.2 All managers have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

5.3 All staff are responsible for the effectiveness of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should in the first instance be reported to the Head Teacher, and if necessary, Lake Haven's Data Protection Officer.

6. Compliance with related policies and agreements

6.1 Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the School's other policies. If an internet post would breach any of the School's policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach Lake Haven's Acceptable Use Policy;
- breach any obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
- breach any obligations staff may have relating to confidentiality;
- breach Lake Haven's Disciplinary Procedure;
- breach Lake Haven's Code of Conduct or the relevant national professional standards;
- defame or disparage Lake Haven or its affiliates, clients, pupils, business partners, suppliers, or other stakeholders;

- harass or bully other staff in any way or breach the School's Dignity at Work Policy;
- unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties or breach the school's Equal Opportunities Policy;
- breach the Data Protection Act or Lake Haven's Data Protection Policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague online) or breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, social media should never be used in a false or misleading way, such as by staff claiming to be someone other than themselves or by making misleading statements).

6.2 Unless expressly authorised to do so in writing by the appropriate senior leader, staff should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to Lake Haven and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the School.

6.3 Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

7. Personal use of social media

7.1 Lake Haven recognises that staff may work long hours and occasionally may desire to use social media for personal activities at work or by means of the school's computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. Lake Haven authorises such occasional use so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with employment responsibilities or productivity. When using social media for personal use, all staff and volunteers must remember that they are personally responsible. They must take care to ensure that they always act responsibly, follow the law, Lake Haven's Acceptable Use Policy and the relevant code of conduct outside school as well as in school. While using social media at work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the school's affairs are also prohibited. To comply with the KCSIE Filtering and Monitoring updates, all staff are notified that any use of our network is monitored and filtered for unacceptable material.

8. Business use of social media

8.1 If an employee wishes to create a school social media account, prior written approval must be sought from the Head Teacher.

8.2 If an employee's duties require them to speak on behalf of Lake Haven in a social media environment, approval must be sought for such communication from the Head Teacher. The only exception to this is when the employee has previously been expressly authorised to speak on behalf of Lake Haven in a social media environment.

8.3 Likewise, if staff are contacted for comments about Lake Haven for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, they must direct the inquiry to the Proprietors and must not respond without written approval.

8.4 The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the remainder of this policy.

9. Monitoring

9.1 The contents of Lake Haven's IT resources and communications systems are the school's property. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, telephone conversation, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on Lake Haven's electronic information and communications systems.

9.2 Lake Haven reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using its IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to the extent permitted or as required by law, to ensure that the Lake Haven's rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and staff consent to such monitoring by their use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

9.3 Lake Haven may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

9.4 Staff should not use Lake Haven's IT resources and communications systems for any matter that they wish to be kept private or confidential from the school.

10. Monitoring and review of this policy

10.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Head Teacher and Proprietor.

Appendix

Responsible use of social media – guidance for staff

Remember that anything you post online is not really private. Below are some common sense guidelines and recommendations that staff are advised to follow to ensure responsible and safe use of social media.

- Do not add pupils as friends or contacts in your social media accounts.
- Follow this social media policy.
- Always maintain professional boundaries.
- Do not engage in discussion with pupils online unless through official school accounts.
- Think about the potential risks: professional boundaries of adding parents to your private social media accounts (refer to policy).
- Consider using an alternative name on sites like Facebook to make it harder for pupils to find you. For example, some members use their partner's surname online but their own surname in school.
- Never post anything that is offensive or aggressive, even if you are very angry or upset. It can easily be taken out of context.
- Remember that any use of Lake Haven's network is filtered and monitored for unacceptable material as per the KCSIE 2023 update
- Remember humour is relative. For example, posting images and/or text about a recent stag or hen night may be deemed inappropriate. Likewise, a few 'lighthearted' comments and/or images about colleagues or students may not be perceived as such by either subject(s) of the humour or the employer. The guiding rule is: if in doubt, don't post it.
- Make sure you regularly check and refresh your site page to ensure it is free of any inappropriate comments and/or images.
- If you are tagged in something in Facebook that you consider inappropriate, use the remove tag feature to untag yourself (for details on how to do this, refer to the Facebook help centre).
- Be cautious of accepting 'friend requests' from people you do not really know. Simply being a 'friend' of your own Facebook friend does not mean that they should automatically be given access to your information.
- Review your profile information and settings on Facebook, Twitter and other sites to ensure it is appropriate as it may be accessed by others such as colleagues, pupils, parents and potential employers.

- Check your privacy and security settings regularly, and keep your date of birth and home address to yourself. Identity theft is a growing crime and this kind of information could be used to gain access to your bank or credit card account.
- If you feel dissatisfied and wish to rant about teaching, politics and life in general, consider doing so anonymously, through a networking account or blog which cannot be attributed to you. Check that anything that you post does not identify you, your school, pupils or parents
- Ensure that any comments and/or images could not be deemed defamatory or in breach of copyright legislation.
- Never post any information which can be used to identify a pupil.
- Do not use social media in any way to attack or abuse colleagues or air any other internal grievances.
- Do not post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Do not engage in any conduct (using personal insults, obscenities) which would not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Do not use social media to 'whistleblow' – raise concerns through the proper channels which would entitle you to legal protection. (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) Lake Haven staff should refer to the Lake Haven Whistleblowing Policy.



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