

PROCEDURE	Owner	Designated Safeguarding Lead
SOCIAL MEDIA	ID (Version)	DU/5.1.1.12 (v2)
	Published	15-August-2023
	Valid Until	15-August-2024

INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE / SCOPE

The Arbor School (“Arbor,” “we,” “the school”) is committed to ensuring that all employees responsible for the care of children and young people always undertake their duties in a professional manner, ensuring at all times that children are treated with sensitivity and respect.

2. RELATED DOCUMENTS

This procedure should be read and applied in conjunction with all relevant governance documents within the school and related reference documents, whether existing or introduced and / or modified subsequent to this procedure being published, including (but not limited to):

Document Title	ID / Reference No.
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	DU/5.1.1
Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedure	DU/5.1.1.1
Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy	DU/5.2.1
Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedure	DU/5.2.1.1
E-Safety (Digital and Online) Procedure	DU/5.1.1.3

3. RESPONSIBILITY ASSIGNMENT

The following position(s) / role(s) has / have been assigned the responsibilities hereunder in relation to the execution of this procedure, requiring the relevant responsible individual(s) to ensure that they are communicated to, understood, and adhered to by all applicable school employees:

Responsibility	Position(s) / Role(s)
Responsible	Employees
Accountable	E-Safety Leads and IT Manager
Consulted	ELT and Head of Marketing and Communications
Informed	Parents/Community

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GUIDELINES

1. SUMMARY

At the Arbor School, the safeguarding of our students is an acknowledged part of the work we do with our young people in both the Primary and Secondary schools. We acknowledge that correct and safe practices are pivotal to maintaining the safety of all students in our care and recognise that the positive use of social media is a key aspect to the outward facing lens of our school. Employees engage in regular training surrounding the appropriate use of social media as part of their daily practice.

2. INTRODUCTION

Employees of the Arbor School can access social media and social networking sites at work, either through Arbor IT systems or via their own personal equipment. The Social Media guide describe the rules governing use of social media at the Arbor School. It sets out how employees must behave when using the school's social media accounts. It also explains the rules about using personal social media accounts at work and describes what employees may say about the Arbor School on their personal accounts. These guidelines should be read alongside other key policies, including the Arbor Acceptable User Policy (AUP).

Social media can bring significant benefits, particularly for building relationships with networking and promoting an Arbor education. However, it is important that employees who use social media within the school do so in a way that enhances the Arbor School's reputation.

These guidelines apply to all employees, contractors and volunteers at the Arbor School who use social media while working, whether for business or personal reasons.

It applies no matter whether that social media use takes place on Arbor School premises, while travelling for business or while working from home. Social media sites and services include (but are not limited to):

- Popular social networks like **WhatsApp, Twitter, TikTok and Facebook.**
- Online review websites like **Which School Advisor, Reevo and Trustpilot.**
- Photographic social networks like **Flickr and Instagram.**
- Question and answer social networks like **Quora and Yahoo Answers.**
- Professional social networks like **LinkedIn.**

Everyone who operates a school social media account or who uses their personal social media accounts at work has the same responsibility for implementing these guidelines. However, our Head of Marketing and Communications and Principal are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Arbor School uses social media safely, appropriately and in line with the Arbor School's vision.

3. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Arbor School recognises that social media offers a platform for the school to perform marketing, stay connected and build the Arbor School profile online. The Arbor School also believes its employees should be involved in industry conversations on social networks. Social media is an excellent way for employees to make useful connections, share ideas and shape discussions.

As an employee working in the United Arab Emirates, it is important to note the following [Cyber Crime Law](#) linked the professional and personal use on a device and digital footprint when here in the UAE:

- **Photographs and Videos:** take care when posting pictures or videos of others online, including via social media. The Cyber Crimes Law makes it an offence to use any IT means to breach someone

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else’s privacy, including by taking pictures of others, or publishing or displaying those pictures or videos without their consent.

- **Privacy and confidentiality:** the importance of the sanctity of the individual’s private life is recognised in UAE law. Disclosing secrets relating to someone’s private life, without that person’s consent, can attract liability under the Penal Code and the Cyber Crimes Law. Similarly, the disclosure of confidential information, such as information belonging to an employer, can also attract legal liability in the UAE.
- **Defamatory statements:** it is an offence to publish information that exposes another person to public hatred or contempt or to make a false accusation that dishonours or discredits another person. Similar provisions also prohibit insulting others or attributing to their conduct that would make them the subject of contempt. UAE law also protects commercial reputations, so staff should familiarise themselves with the risks of writing negative reviews online.
- **Content contrary to morality, social cohesion, etc:** the Cyber Crimes Law makes it an offence to use any IT means for activities that are inconsistent with public morals and good conduct. This could include content that is contrary to the teachings of Islam, blasphemous, lewd, that encourages sinful activity, or that is aimed at corrupting minors, etc. It can also extend to content that might negatively impact on social cohesion and peace, such as content that stirs sedition or sectarianism, mocks the leaders of the nation, or hurts national unity or social peace.

4. BASIC ADVICE

Regardless of which social networks employees are using, or whether they are using business or personal accounts, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

- **Know the social network.** Employees should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing.
- **If unsure, do not post.** Employees should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks.
- **Be thoughtful and polite.** Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online.
- **Look out for security threats.** Employees should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts.
- **Keep personal use reasonable.** Although the Arbor School believes that having employees who are active on social media can be valuable both to those employees and to the business, staff should exercise restraint in their personal use of social media.
- **Do not make promises without checking.** Some social networks are very public, so employees should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of the Arbor School without checking.
- **Manage complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and issues.
- **Do not escalate things.** It is easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. Employees should always take the time to think before responding and hold back if they are in any doubt at all.

5. ARBOR SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Only people who have been authorised to use the Arbor School’s social networking accounts may do so. Authorisation is usually provided by the Head of Marketing and Communications. It is typically granted when social media-related tasks form a core part of an employee’s job. Allowing only designated people to use the accounts ensures the school’s social media presence is consistent and coherent.

Employees should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with the Arbor School’s overall objectives. For instance, employees may use the school’s social media accounts to:

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- Share **blog posts, articles and other content** created by the Arbor School.
- Share **insightful articles, videos, media, and other content** relevant to the business, but created by others.
- Provide followers with an **insight into what goes on at the Arbor School**.
- Promote **marketing campaigns**.
- Support **new launches and other initiatives**.

***ONLY images of children for whom consent have been gained may be used and names of children MUST NOT be used in posts.**

Social media is a powerful tool that changes quickly. Employees are encouraged to think of new ways to use it, and to put those ideas to the Head of Marketing and Communications.

6. INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT AND USES

The Arbor School social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or to take part in any activities that could bring the school into disrepute. When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, employees should always review the content thoroughly, and should not post a link based solely on a headline.

7. PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The Arbor School recognises that employees' personal social media accounts can generate several benefits. For instance:

- Employees members can make **industry contacts** that may be useful in their jobs.
- Employees can discover content to help them **learn and develop** in their role.
- By posting about the Arbor School, employees can help to **build the business' profile** online.

11. ACCEPTABLE USE

- Employees may use their personal social media accounts for work-related purposes during regular hours but must ensure this is for a specific reason. Social media should not affect the ability of employees to perform their regular duties.
- Use of social media accounts for non-work purposes is restricted to non-work times, such as breaks and during lunch.

12. TALKING ABOUT/REPRESENTING THE ARBOR SCHOOL

- Any Arbor School related posting, must **clearly 'tag' the Arbor School** into the post only on your personal professional account.
- **No Arbor branding should be used in a post on a personal social media account.**
- **No Arbor school student should be used in a post on a personal social media account.**
- Employees should ensure their social media account does not represent the Arbor School's views or opinions.
- Employees may wish to include a disclaimer in social media profiles: 'The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.'

13. SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Employees MUST NOT:

- Create or transmit material that might be **defamatory or incur liability** for the Arbor School.
- Post messages, status updates or links to **material or content that is inappropriate***.

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- **Accept friend requests from current students, or ex-pupils under the age of 13** (Notify the school/parents if a child sends a friend request).
- **Correspond with parents via social media:** use a school email address instead.
- Use social media for any **illegal or criminal activities**.
- Send **offensive or harassing material** to others via social media.
- Broadcast **unsolicited views** on social, political, religious, or other non- business-related matters.
- Send or post messages or material that **could damage the Arbor School’s image or reputation**.
- Interact with the Arbor School’s competitors in any ways which could be interpreted as being **offensive, disrespectful, or rude**. (Communication with direct competitors should be kept to a minimum.)
- Discuss **colleagues, competitors, customers, or suppliers** without their approval.
- Post, upload, forward or link to **spam, junk email or chain emails and messages**.

***Inappropriate material/content includes** pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling, and illegal drugs. This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone based on race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

14. COPYRIGHT

The Arbor School respects and operates within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to:

- Publish or share any **copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties**, unless permitted by that third party.
- If employees wish to **share content published on another website**, they are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.
- Share links to **illegal copies** of music, films, games, or other software.

15. SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Employees should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social networks.

To maintain confidentiality, employees must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the Arbor School that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.
- Share or link to any content or information owned by another school/organisation or person that could be considered **confidential or commercially sensitive**.
- Share or link to data in any way that could breach the Arbor School’s **data protection policy**.

To protect social accounts, employees must:

- Ensure the Arbor School social media accounts should be **protected by strong passwords** that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.
- Wherever possible, employees should use **two-factor authentication** (often called mobile phone verification) to safeguard Arbor’s accounts.
- Employees must not use a new piece of **software, app, or service** with any of the school’s social media accounts without receiving approval from the Head of Marketing and Communications.

To avoid social scams, employees must:

- Employees should watch for **phishing attempts**, where scammers may attempt to use deception to obtain information relating to either the Arbor School or its community. Employees should never

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reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Identities must always be verified in the usual way before any account information is shared or discussed.

- Employees should **avoid clicking links** in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious. Users should look out for URLs contained in generic or vague-sounding direct messages.

16. STUDENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

To maintain a safe and productive learning environment, the Arbor School requires all students who access or create social networking sites through school's resources to abide by the following:

- If something you are about to post makes you uncomfortable, take a minute to consult with trusted adults.
- Do not bully others online*.
- Be open offline about what you experience online. Report inappropriate online behaviour.
- Maintain proper professional relationships and communication channels with any Arbor employee/adult.
- All statements must be true and not misleading.
- Only comment on things about which you are well informed.
- Do not violate privacy, confidentiality, or legal guidelines.
- Protect yourself and others by not revealing private, confidential, or sensitive information.
- Ask permission before posting pictures or videos of others.
- Maintain consistent, acceptable behaviour online and offline.

* Online child-on-child abuse is any form of child-on-child abuse with a digital element, for example, **sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, distribution of sexualised content and harassment.**

17. PARENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Parents are important partners in developing safe and appropriate use of social media and are encouraged to:

- Monitor your child's use of social media.
- Talk frankly to your child about proper online relationships and behaviours.
- Be friends with your children online in order to view your child's online posts.
- Be involved and aware.
- Report inappropriate online behaviour. Raise queries, concerns, and complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media.
- Refrain from posting any photos, videos or comments that include other children at the school.
- Refrain from posting anything malicious about the Arbor School or any member of the school community.

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Abbreviation / Term	Description / Definition
IT	Information Technology
UAE	United Arab Emirates