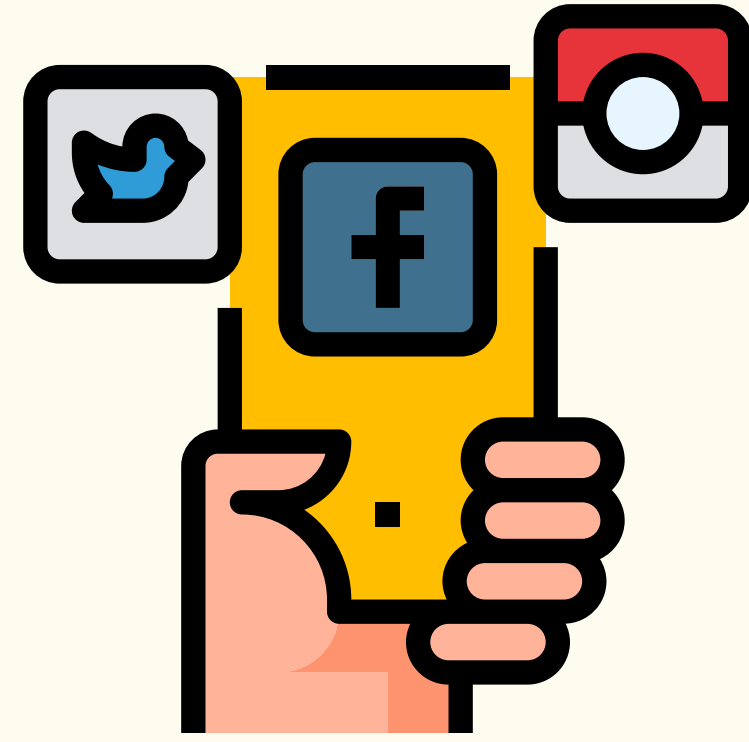# SAFE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF

For some time now, social media has played a key part in how we stay in touch with friends and family, and receive news and information.

Be warned, if you can be linked to any inappropriate or offensive content via social media, this could put your job and professional reputation at risk.

This guide has been created to ensure that you understand how to use social media appropriately to keep you, your students and your job safe.

We advise you to also refer to your school's social media policy. Please raise any questions or issues internally with staff.

1 CHECK YOUR PRIVACY SETTTINGS

As a professional working in education, it is imperative that you check the 'privacy settings' for each of your social media accounts.

- Set all of your personal social media accounts to 'private.' DO NOT leave any as 'public.'

- Choose an appropriate profile picture. Even on 'private mode', your profile picture and name are still viewable on most social media platforms.

- Use an abbreviated or shortened version of your name. This makes it more likely that only people you are personally in touch with will be able to find your profile.

SECURE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

2

For every social media account, use the app settings to ensure that your personal information is only shared with your approved 'friends'.

- The settings on many social media apps can be located via the 'cog' icon pictured.
- On any social media platform where you can be tagged in a post or photo, ensure this is by request only.
- Make sure that your location is not being used by your social media apps. Turn 'location services' off to ensure your geographical location is not being tagged on posts.

TEST YOUR PRIVACY SETTTINGS

3

The best way to make sure your social media accounts are set up safely is to search for yourself regularly online.

This will show you what other users can see if they search for your name and try to view your profile.

Do this regularly as social media platforms often update their privacy settings and add new features.

THINK BEFORE YOU POST

4

Before any comment, repost, share, like or post – think very carefully before you click 'publish'.

- Could your post offend anyone?
- Does it seem unprofessional?
- Does the post positively represent you and your school's professional reputation?

If unsure, DO NOT POST! It is not worth risking the professional reputation of yourself or your school.
To that end, we recommend that you look back at historical photos and posts on social media feeds – delete anything that could be deemed as inappropriate or offensive.

SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY WARNINGS

If you have a friend who posts regularly on social media, talk to them about the posting of any content that involves you.

It is reasonable to state that you do not want any photos or mentions of yourself to be shared on social media.

Don't forget that hashtags (#) can link your post to others with the same hashtag. They also make your post easier to search for online.

Be very mindful if choosing to use hashtags.

In the unlikely instance where someone has set up a fake profile in your name, screenshot this profile and inform your school straight away.

Immediately contact the social media provider to report the fake account to get it taken down.

Do not accept 'friend requests' or 'follow's from any current or previous students. If you receive regular requests via social media from students, inform the designated safeguarding lead at your school.

Also, make sure you check the privacy settings of your account are secure. If you are being found online, this means there is more you can do to secure your accounts.