

**Axe Valley Learning Community
Policy Statement on the Use of Social Media**

**AXE VALLEY LEARNING COMMUNITY OF SCHOOLS
(Logo?)**

Secondary Schools: Axe Valley Community College Colyton Grammar School Primary Schools The Acorn Federation, comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs. Ethelstone's Primary School• Chardstock Primary School All Saints Primary School & Beer Primary Axminster Community Primary School St. Mary's Catholic Primary School Membury Primary School Musbury Primary School	Primary Schools (Continued) The Axe Beacon Federation, comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colyton Primary School• Kilmington Primary School• Seaton Primary School• Shute Primary School
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Introduction

Social media is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

This includes blogs, message boards, social networking websites (such as [facebook](#), [google+](#), [twitter](#), [bebo](#), [MySpace](#)), content sharing websites (such as [flickr](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#)) and many other similar online channels.

Rationale

Every school in the Axe Valley Learning Community prides itself on being a school family in which each and every child and their families are welcomed, highly valued and respected. Every school is a happy, caring, nurturing community which strives to provide the very best all-round education for each child whilst ensuring they feel safe and secure. Every school teaches its children about respect, social awareness and social responsibility which includes safe and acceptable behaviour on the Internet and social media sites. School staff, governors, parents and children work very hard and do their absolute best to ensure that children are happy individuals who want to learn and develop further within this ethos of care for ourselves, for others and for the world in which we live.

All schools in the Axe Valley Learning Community accept that social media forms a big part of children's lives in today's world. We all recognise its value and make use of it to share information, engage learners and promote events online. Schools are unique, very busy and dynamic places. We see our children more or less every weekday for at least seven years and really get to know our families. During that time, there may be the occasional differences of opinion - as with any family. Discussion on social media sites does not solve these differences and only serves to lower school morale in a profession which is completely dedicated to doing its best for children.

With an increase in use of all types of social media for professional and personal purposes a policy that sets out clear guidance for staff to manage risk and behaviour online is essential. Core messages should include the protection of pupils, the school and the individual when publishing any material online. Expectations for teachers' professional conduct are set out in 'Teachers Standards 2012'. While, Ofsted's e-safety framework 2012, reviews how a school protects and educates staff and pupils in their use of technology, including what measures would be expected to be in place to intervene and support should a particular issue arise.

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All schools, academies and local authorities have a duty of care to provide a safe learning environment for pupils and staff. The Axe Valley Learning Community schools provide several measures to ensure reasonable steps are in place to minimise risk of harm to pupils, staff and the school through limiting access to personal information. The schools' codes of conduct state that staff and pupils should not make reference in social media, to pupils, parents, carers or other school staff and stipulate that they do not engage in online discussion on personal matters relating to members of the school community. Regular staff training, regularly reviewed pupil codes of conduct and appropriate security settings limit access to personal information and prevent inappropriate or negative opinion being expressed or made public.

Joint Policy Statement

The Axe Valley Learning Community schools respectfully ask that all parents, carers, pupils and members of all our school families, including their friends and families from further afield, are aware of their own conduct and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour when using social media sites in relation to our schools. Parents, carers, pupils and members of our school families need to recognise that they are responsible for what they put on social media sites and may be held to account. Gossip and flippant remarks on social media are detrimental to the happy ethos and good name of our schools.

We respectfully ask that parents opt for the old-fashioned method of speaking with their child's teacher or the Headteacher if they have a problem or a query or if they need to pass on important information to us, in accordance with our stated lines of communication and compliments or complaints procedures, which observe confidentiality.

We respectfully ask that all members of our school communities and their wider families and friends only use social media to show our schools in a positive light, respecting our hard work and dedication to all your children.

This Policy Statement is signed by the Headteachers of all the above named schools in the Axe Valley Learning Community:

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Mr. Martin Smith, Headteacher, Axe Valley
Community College

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Mr. Paul Evans, Headteacher,
Colyton Grammar School

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Mrs. Andrea Rice,
Executive Headteacher, Acorn Federation

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Mrs. Angela Herrera
Headteacher, St. Mary's Catholic Primary School