

**POLICY NAME:** Policy on Social Media Ethics  
**POLICY NUMBER:** 5.1  
**DATE OF APPROVAL:** 15 September 2016

---

**POLICY CROSS-REFERENCED:**

- Definitions and General Principles
- Policy on Official Communications
- Policy on Anti-Bullying
- Policy on Academic Honesty
- Policy on Technology Use
- The Beacon Academy Code of Ethics

**REFERENCES**

NA

---

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Beacon Academy acknowledges the exciting opportunities offered by online technologies (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, etc.) and encourages their optimal use for communication, learning, fun and personal growth. However, the school also recognizes that the manner in which these tools are used evidently and increasingly blur our private and public lives --for better or worse.

It is in this context that the the school believes the increasing development and use of social media must be understood. The Beacon Academy holds that all Academy personnel (administrators, faculty, staff, students currently employed at or matriculated in the school) must engage this digital world creatively as well as critically in keeping with the values of the institutions and the general well-being of the members of our community.

**POLICY GUIDELINES**

1. Protecting Online Presence

- i. Academy personnel are encouraged to always read and understand a site's Terms of Use and Privacy Policy, and to adjust privacy settings of their accounts accordingly.
- ii. Academy personnel are encouraged to consider adopting maximum privacy settings at first and then adjust or update them accordingly. It should be noted that privacy controls are not fool-proof and sites may often alter their policies without notification.
- iii. Academy personnel must take caution when giving out personal information online. This includes but is not limited to, last names, telephone numbers, home addresses, exact birth dates, and photographs. It should be noted that this information may be used in many ways: they may be culled for marketing purposes without permission; sensitive information may be used as a stepping-stone to crack online passwords; photos may be placed in online channels without authorization.
- iv. Academy personnel must be careful when adding strangers to their list of friends on social media sites. This has been a well-documented strategy for acquiring personal information in order to

break online security measures, steal identities, spreading viruses or malware, and other malicious and even dangerous activities.

- v. Academy personnel must never give out your password to their accounts to another person or institution, unless their trustworthiness is guaranteed.

## 2. The Exercise of Good Judgement

- i. Academy personnel must be thoughtful of how one presents oneself online because anything posted can have immediate and/or future consequences. The Academy recognizes that how a person represent him or herself online--via own wall posts, status updates or comments--is perceived as an extension of one's real self and, by extension, his or her professional affiliation with the Beacon Academy.
  - a. Academy personnel must not post anything that may compromise the nature, vision and values of the Beacon Academy.
  - b. Academy personnel are asked not to post anything that he or she would not want friends, enemies, parents, teachers, present authorities and future employers to see.
- ii. Academy personnel must protect confidential information of the institution and refrain from releasing such information in public fora. This includes information regarding colleagues and students (e.g. academic performance) and other stakeholders of the school.
- iii. Academy personnel must exercise caution when posting statements that may be considered libelous or scandalous. These may have legal ramifications.
- iv. Academy personnel must be critical of his or her membership in online groups or participation in discussions that may reflect negatively on him or her as a person and a professional.
- v. Academy personnel must be conscious of potentially inappropriate texts and images being posted of you. Actions must be taken to correct or resolve these via friendly requests or "untagging."
- vi. Academy personnel are discouraged from adding students and parents as "friends" on personal social media accounts in order to maintain the professional distance expected by their affiliation with the school and of their status with their clientele.

## 3. Embodying Integrity

- i. Academy personnel must recognize that there is always a human person behind a public profile that asks for respect and consideration.
- ii. Academy personnel must not not spam, slam or personally attack others online. Genuine criticism of another may best be demonstrated through private communication or through established institutional channels, whether online or off-line.
- iii. Academy personnel must be wary of encouraging the compromising of another's dignity through your online behavior. Bullying, lynching, and stalking are violations to human dignity on the Internet as they are in real life; and may be subject to legal ramifications.
- iv. Academy personnel must not encourage the spread of hearsay, deception and inaccuracy. All efforts must be made in order to verify facts and ensure opinions are informed.

- v. Academy personnel must not misrepresent him or herself. The acknowledgement of one's identity and professional affiliation is required, as is the provision of an appropriate disclaimer is necessary in order to distinguish a personal views from the views of the group or institution to which you belong.
- vi. Academy personnel must be honest and give appropriate attribution where and when this is due. They may not use other people's intellectual property--texts, photographs, videos, music, etc.--without their explicit consent. The verification of copyright status of online material that is shared is required.

#### 4. Violation of Policy

- i. Violations of this policy are responded to with according to the code of conduct provisions and processes relevant to the unit of the Academy personnel involved, e.g. the Beacon Academy Code of Ethics for administrators and staff, the Faculty Handbook for faculty, the Student & Parent Handbook for students.

#### 5. Communication

- i. This policy is to be communicated as guidelines across all Academic personnel ((administrators, faculty, staff, students, and members of the Board of Trustees) in forms and manners appropriate to each sector.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy on Social Media Ethics will be reviewed every five years.