



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social Media Policy Statement

Definition of social media

For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video- and image-sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.

Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

Use of social media at work

The organisation encourages employees to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites as part of their work. It is an important part of how the organisation communicates with its applicants/clients, and promotes its services.

Employees may contribute to the organisation's social media activities, for example by writing for our blogs/managing a Facebook account/running an official Twitter account for the organisation/part of the organisation.

Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the organisation's social media activities, they are representing the organisation. Staff who use social media as part of their job must adhere to the following rules.

Employees should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the organisation in the public sphere. These safeguards:

- making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the organisation;
- obtaining permission from a manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media; and
- getting a colleague to check the content before it is published.

Any communications that employees make in a professional capacity through social media must not:

- bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by:
 - criticising or arguing with clients, applicants, colleagues or rivals;
 - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
 - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
- breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - revealing trade secrets or information owned by the organisation;
 - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague, client or applicant) or organisation (such as a rival business); or
 - discussing the organisation's internal workings (such as deals that it is doing with a client or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public);



- breach copyright, for example by:
 - using someone else's images or written content without permission;
 - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or
- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
 - using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the organisation); or
 - posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

Excessive use of social media at work

Employees should not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites, even if they claim to be doing so as part of their work. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on employees' productivity. They should ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their other duties.

Monitoring use of social media during work time

The organisation reserves the right to monitor employees' internet usage, but will endeavour to inform an affected employee when this is to happen and the reasons for it. The organisation considers that valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been spending an excessive amount of time using social media websites for non-work-related activity; or
- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy.

The organisation reserves the right to retain information that it has gathered on employees' use of the internet for a period of one year.

Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

Social media in your personal life

The organisation recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of the organisation, employees must be aware that they can damage the organisation if they are recognised as being one of our employees.

Employees are allowed to say that they work for the organisation, which recognises that it is natural for its staff sometimes to want to discuss their work on social media. However, the employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the organisation's name.

If employees do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which the organisation operates), they must include on their profile a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."



Any communications that employees make in a personal capacity through social media must not:

- bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by:
 - criticising or arguing with customers, colleagues or rivals;
 - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
 - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
- breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - revealing trade secrets or information owned by the organisation;
 - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or customer contact) or organisation (such as a rival business); or
 - discussing the organisation's internal workings (such as deals that it is doing with an applicant/client or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public);
- breach copyright, for example by:
 - using someone else's images or written content without permission;
 - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or
- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
 - using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the organisation); or
 - posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Unless it is in relation to finding candidates (for example, if an individual has put his/her details on social media websites for the purpose of attracting prospective employers), the HR department and managers should conduct searches, either themselves or through a third party, on social media only when these are directly relevant to the applicant's skills or claims that he/she has made in the recruitment process. For instance:

- a prospective employee might claim that he/she has used social media in his/her previous job (for example, as a publicity tool); or
- a prospective employee's social media use may be directly relevant to a claim made in his/her application (for example, if he/she runs a blog based around a hobby mentioned in his/her CV or a skill in which he/she claims to be proficient).

There should be no systematic or routine checking of prospective employees' online social media activities, as conducting these searches during the selection process might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics (for example, sexual orientation or religious beliefs) played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with the organisation's equal opportunities policy.



Disciplinary action over social media use

All employees are required to adhere to this policy. Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the organisation, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

This policy has been approved & authorised by:

Name: Gavin Milligan
Position: Managing Director
Date: 01/12/2022
Signature:

Revisions

Version	Date Created	By	Reason for change
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2		Gavin Milligan	