Social Media Policy

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Charity Number: SCO 36198

Version 1.1
10 JUNE 2021
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1. Introduction and Aim

City of Glasgow College recognises the impact and benefits of social media and encourages staff to engage, collaborate, learn and innovate through social media platforms. It can be used effectively to express and share ideas, news and successes; keep staff and students up to date with important College developments and promote positive academic debate about teaching and research.

The College is aware that the majority of our staff and students use various social media platforms, whether personally or professionally or both. The purpose of this policy is to protect the College, staff and students' reputation and values while supporting the appropriate and safe use of social media.

2. Scope

In this policy the term social media is used to describe a broad range of technology platforms which allow the creation and sharing of content across a virtual community. Examples include popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Snapchat; as well as other services such as personal blogs and discussion forums.

This policy applies to all staff, including Board members, temporary workers, agency staff, and individuals engaged with the College on a self-employed contract basis who use social media to communicate:

- Content that identifies them as a City of Glasgow College employee or student

- Content relating to others at/in City of Glasgow College

- Content created in connection with their College employment or course and

- Content about the College.

This policy applies to all social media communications made at any time, in any language, whether privately or publicly, including outside of normal working hours, and from anywhere, whether to an individual or wider audience. Personal social media communications which do not, in any way, relate to the College are outside the scope of this policy.

This policy applies equally to the use of social media using either College-issued devices, or personal devices. College-issued devices include PC, MAC, laptop, iPad, tablet and smartphones.

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This policy also applies to internal College IT systems which include a social networking aspect, such as Microsoft Teams, MyCity and MyConnect.

All other City of Glasgow College policies also apply in the context of social media.

This policy does not form any part of a contract of employment and can be amended/updated at any time.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- reading and taking the time to ensure that they understand this policy;

- ensuring that any use of social media (professionally and personally) is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies, including the IT Acceptable Use Policy;

- completing any relevant training as required;

- ensuring that relevant guidelines are followed; and

- reporting any incidents or concerns regarding social media use to their manager, supervisor or the Digital Content Officer (in the Brand & Communications department) or your HR advisor.

All Managers are responsible for:

- reporting any incidents or concerns regarding social media as mentioned above;

- authorising College-related social media posts where designated;

- completing relevant training as required, as well as ensuring their staff are appropriately trained where required, and

- addressing any issues of misuse of social media by those staff for whom they are responsible.

All City of Glasgow College-branded social media account owners (official

and unofficial) are responsible for:

- completing any relevant training as required;

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- operating accounts appropriately, and in accordance with this policy and relevant guidelines;

- seeking relevant authorisation for official City of Glasgow College accounts/posts where required;

- putting in place appropriate security on accounts including password management;

- ensuring that accounts have up to date content;

- responding to comments; and

- closing down unused accounts.

4. General Principles

It is expected that staff and students will act in a responsible and ethical manner when using social media, always treating others with dignity and respect. Regardless of the privacy settings applied to each site, users should assume that any content posted on social media is publicly visible and permanent. If content is deleted, it may not be permanently removed. Each individual is personally liable and will be held accountable for the content that they post.

Staff must not use personal social media accounts to engage with students. For example, staff should never send a "friend" request to a student on Facebook, nor accept such a request from a student, and staff should never chat with students over WhatsApp or via Twitter direct message (DM).

Use of social media must at all times be consistent with other College policies, such as the Information Technology Acceptable Use policy and the Data Protection policy.

In order to protect City of Glasgow College staff, students, College reputation and values, care must be taken: to avoid a breach of confidentiality, for example by revealing confidential College information; revealing confidential College intellectual property; revealing confidential information about an individual or organisation.

Not to 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, race, gender, gender reassignment, race, nationality, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

To never use social media to bully or defame an individual; post content or links to content that is discriminatory or offensive.

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To avoid a breach of copyright or other intellectual property laws, for example by using other people's images or written content without permission and/or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.

Not to bring the College into disrepute, for example by: unreasonably criticising or arguing with students, partners, colleagues, external stakeholders or competitors.

If a member of staff or a student is found to be in breach of these guidelines, they may be subject to disciplinary action. Please see the relevant Disciplinary Policy for more information. In more serious cases, an individual may also be subject to civil or criminal legal proceedings.

5. Official CoGC Social Media Accounts

The College maintains official accounts for social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and SnapChat - links to which can be found via the College website. These sites are monitored by the Brand & Communications team and are the preferred accounts for users to communicate and interact with City of Glasgow.

Responsibility for the suitability of information posted on these sites lies with the author, who must ensure that the material is appropriate for all users who might access it. The College will remove any content found to be inappropriate and may block users from posting on these sites if it becomes necessary.

Staff can contribute to the social media activities of City of Glasgow College by writing for blogs, contributing content to official College social media accounts, or by helping with the running of official social media accounts.

When contributing to these social media activities you are representing the College and must at all times follow the published guidelines for use of official College social media.

If you wish to set-up a new official College social media account, you should in the first instance discuss it with the Brand & Communications team (Digital Content Officer). If the social media profile is affiliated with a specific course, the user must also obtain permission from the relevant Curriculum Head.

Permission from the Brand & Communications department must be obtained before using City of Glasgow College branding in any form of social media.

Final approval for the creation of a new official College social media account must be given by the Director of Communications.

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6. Using Personal Social Media Accounts

Social Media can be an effective way for staff to connect with peers in College and beyond, to develop and improve their professional profile, and to support their work by providing opportunities for collaboration. The College encourages this and for staff to celebrate their connection with the College.

As a member of staff your activity on social media is likely to be linked with the College, regardless of whether you are acting in a professional or personal capacity, and whether you are using a professional or personal account. When using social media in a personal context, staff are still expected to uphold City of Glasgow College values, respect other employees, students and stakeholders, and protect confidentiality, privacy and security. It is important therefore when using a personal account in a professional capacity to make it clear that you are acting on behalf of yourself and not the College. In particular:

- Do not use account names that suggest the account is an official City of Glasgow College account.

- Do not use the City of Glasgow College logo without official authorisation.

- If your personal social media account indicates your role/association with City of Glasgow College, you should include a disclaimer such as "The views expressed here are my own and not City of Glasgow College's."

Staff should ensure there is always a clear separation between work use and personal/social use of their social media accounts. We therefore recommend that staff keep their personal and professional affairs apart by having separate online profiles for their work and personal lives. Personal data relating to domestic affairs may be processed on the grounds of the household exemption, meaning that data protection legislation would not apply.

It may require additional work and it would be a matter of personal choice for the individual. However, if you choose to use social networking sites for mixed purposes (i.e. work and leisure), you need to make sure that any use for work reasons complies with the Data Protection Act and UK General Data Protection Regulation. Privacy settings should be set to maximum on personal accounts and professional accounts to avoid potential hijacking of accounts.

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7. Using Social Media as a Learning and Teaching Tool

Where possible, the preferred method of online communication between staff and students is the Virtual Learning Environment, MyCity, or College email. Teaching staff should use MyCity when publishing course resources and materials.

The College provides a number of collaborative tools that are available to all, including Microsoft Teams, MyConnect and Moodle. Staff are encouraged to make use of these tools whenever possible. If staff choose to use external social media platforms as an alternative/supplementary tool for learning and teaching, professional and personal boundaries must be fully recognised and respected.

Students may decide they wish to use their own personal social media accounts and tools for collaboration. Staff should not participate in or engage with such private groups, and students must not be encouraged or required to join them.

8. Monitoring and Privacy

As noted in the IT Acceptable Use Policy, the College reserves the right to monitor employee internet and social media usage in accordance with information security standards.

User data is treated as confidential and private. Valid reasons for checking staff internet usage include:

- Suspicions that an employee is in breach of College policy;

- Requests for access/ monitoring from Police or Security Services;

- Requests made under the Data Protection Act (2018) or Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Scotland 2002)

- Requests to establish facts as part of a misconduct investigation

- Requests from the employee themselves and

- To facilitate the operation, repair and essential maintenance of College IT systems.

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9. Legislation

All social media use must comply with existing UK legislation. Any illegal or unlawful acts that can be committed using words or images can equally be committed using social media. Posts on social media that violate those general principles could potentially be in breach of legislation such as:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation 2020
- The Defamation Act 2013
- Equality Act 2010
- Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009
- The Communications Act 2003
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Protection From Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- The Contempt of Court Act 1981
- The Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

Other legislation relating to social media use include the following:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and
- Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000 Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (listed in Schedule 1 of the Human Rights Act 1998), covers the right to respect for private and family life. As such, when monitoring social media use by employees or students, members of staff should avoid doing anything that might constitute an invasion of their privacy.

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10. References

10.1. Policy Framework

Associated Policies and Procedures	Title
Policy	IT Acceptable Use
Policy	Data Protection (for Staff and Students)
	Data Protection – Privacy Notice
Policy and Procedure	Staff - Disciplinary Procedure
Procedure	Staff - Code of Conduct
Policy	Staff - Complaint Handling
Policy	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Policy	Fraud Prevention
Policy	Grievance
Policy	Prevent
Policy	Safeguarding
Policy	Student - Bullying and Harassment
Policy	Student - Disciplinary Procedure
Policy	Student - Complaint Handling
Policy	Use Your Own Device

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11. Document Control and Review

Approval Status	Approved
Approved by	Director of Communications
Date Approved	June 2021
EQIA Status	EQIA Conducted? Yes: ☒ No: ☐
Proposed Review Date	June 2024
Lead Department	Brand & Communications
Lead Officer(s)	Associate Director B&C
Board Committee	
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12. Revision Log

Version Date	Section of Document	Description of Revision
Version 1 06 Aug 2014	All	First Version of City of Glasgow College Social Media Policy
Version 1.1	All	Updated to include change of job roles in organisation

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