



# Social Media Policy

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## Context

The College recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities that a social media presence offers. We aim to share information about the College’s activities online to engage both current and prospective students, Fellows, teaching and non-academic staff, clients, and the public. Social media accounts provide a flexible delivery platform, and College staff, where appropriate, are encouraged to make effective and appropriate use of them.

Staff are expected to promote, protect and enhance the College’s reputation in their use of social media. This Policy provides a framework for staff to use when engaging on social media in a work capacity, or in a personal capacity when discussing the College or their employment.

## Scope

For the purposes of this policy, social media is defined as any online interactive communication tool which encourages participation and exchanges. Common examples include; Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn.

This guidance is for all staff who directly or indirectly, represent the College online. It applies to online communications posted at any time and from anywhere, whether to an individual, a limited group or the world.



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## **Personal usage vs. professional usage**

The College respects privacy and understands that staff may use social media accounts in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the College's reputation are covered by this policy.

Professional responsibilities apply regardless of the medium being used. All social media communications that might affect the College's reputation, whether made either in a private or professional capacity, should be thought through carefully.

Professional communications are those posted through a College account. Personal communications are those made via a private social media account. Where a private account is used which clearly identifies Magdalene College as your employer it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the College. An appropriate disclaimer, such as: "the views expressed here are my own and in no way reflect the views of Magdalene College" should be included. If you, or the content that you post, links you to the College, expect that it could be re-published by the national or international press and by proxy, attributed to the College.

The College is strongly committed to the principle of freedom of speech and expression, and this includes interactions through social media. It should be noted, however, that social media is a tool known to be used by terrorists to encourage others to adopt extreme beliefs or attitudes. All members of the College that use social media are therefore expected to use it responsibly. The Colleges take seriously their requirement to report content or views that promote or incite criminal extremist behaviour on their social media platforms or as a result of the misappropriation of their brands. Staff should report such concerns to their Head of Department or a member of the College PREVENT team.

## **Policy**

### *Guidelines for Professional Usage*

Staff who contribute to the College's social media activities (for example by managing a Facebook account/running an official Twitter account) must use the same standards of professionalism they use in all other aspects of their work. We ask that staff who use social media as part of their jobs follow these rules:

- Give the same regard to confidentiality, ethics and messaging that you would with any other form of communication about the College in the public domain.
- Make sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the College
- Refrain from disclosing confidential information, personal data, trade secrets, or financial data
- Refrain from belittling or criticising the College, its competitors or any other third parties
- Be aware of who owns third-party content, and of any intellectual property restrictions
- Consider the global nature of social media and make sure communications are appropriate for a global audience
- Ensure passwords for social channels are changed regularly, and that they are changed immediately when someone with access leaves the College

### *New Account Creation*

Any individual wishing to open a new College social media account must seek approval from their Head of Department. Please consider the following before seeking approval:



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- Is there a clear business case for creating a new account?
- Do you have a clear strategy and content plan?
- Is there enough time and resource required to run the account?

## Requirements:

- Let your Line Manager and Head of Department know the name of the account, and what you're going to use it for
- Set the account up in such a way that multiple people within your department can share the load of running it, or that if a staff member who setup the account leaves, access to the account is still possible. Consider whether it is most appropriate to set up the account using a general email address

## *Responsibilities*

All staff are responsible for:

- Knowing the contents of this guidance
- Attending appropriate training
- Informing the relevant Head of Department where a College account is to be used
- Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via local accounts

Line Managers and Heads of Departments are responsible for:

- Addressing concerns or questions regarding posts or comments via official and personal accounts
- Reporting outcomes to the Assistant Bursar, or escalating the matter to involve appropriate agencies
- Attending additional relevant training

## *Screening (Job Applicants / Prospective Students / Donors)*

Staff will not use social media to screen job applicants, unless there is a legitimate reason to do so (for example, the role has a significant public-facing element to it, or is involved with publicity and presenting the College to the general public). However if aspects of a prospective employee's social media profile are brought to our attention and give rise to concerns about their suitability for the role in question, we may need to consider them.

Fellows and Staff involved in the admissions process will not screen students on social media as part of the recruitment and selection process. In addition, social media will not be used to screen potential donors.

However, it is fine to use social media to promote vacancies and opportunities.

## *Security*

Staff are responsible for ensuring that passwords and other access controls for College social media accounts are of adequate strength and kept secure. Staff should be familiar with privacy settings and ensure that these are appropriate for both content and intended audience.

When making use of social media accounts there are various security risks to address. Staff should be aware of the risk of false information being posted on the institution's behalf, where an account is hijacked for example. When logged into a social media account you are exposed to having your account hijacked if you click on a phishing link. These are often disguised as genuine enquiries or comments for example "Look what someone is saying about you [hyperlink]".



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Staff should ensure that any devices that have social media login details stored on them are set to lock automatically after each use. If any devices which contain login details are lost or stolen, staff should change the passwords of all social media accounts that the device was connected with, and let other managers of the accounts know.

## *Use of other people's materials*

Sharing content such as images, photographs and video is extremely popular and easy to do via social media accounts. While this may have value in an educational context, there is a real risk of breaching the rights of individuals who own the different media e.g. images rights, patents, copyright in a blog, or rights associated with collaborative outputs. All staff should ensure they have permission or other justification to share content in this way. Content is particularly risky where it is commercially valuable, confidential and/or sensitive.

Staff will not post any images, photographs, videos, text etc. via social media accounts without appropriate permission from the rights holders. If unsure, staff are advised to check permissions attached to digital content prior to posting via social media.

Liking and sharing relevant posts from other user's social media accounts is good practice. It shows that your account is giving back to the community and not just broadcasting its own messages. However, you should validate the authenticity of any users that you would like to share content from, paying particular attention to:

- Fake accounts which are set up to represent individuals that don't have their own official presence on a network
- Spam or automated accounts which exist to increase follower numbers but don't have an authentic voice, these can often be spotted on Twitter by a high equal number of followers and accounts followed (many thousands of each)

## *Personal information*

Personal information is information about a particular living person (which includes photography or other recording media). No personal information will be shared via social media accounts without consent, unless it is in line with our Data Protection Policy. Authorised staff posting content or setting up accounts are responsible for ensuring appropriate informed consents are in place.

Staff must keep colleagues' personal information safe and secure at all times. When using social media accounts, staff should never publish colleagues' personal information. By its very nature, social media enables and encourages users to share data, including personal data e.g. a photograph of an identifiable living person. The College must process all personal information that it collects and uses in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All uploads, storage, communications must be lawful and fair. Staff intending to use a social media account must therefore ensure that all parties know what type of information they are expected to share, for what purpose and who will have access to it. Even where consent is in place to process personal data, staff must also ensure that adequate security is in place to protect it.

## *Moderation*

Many social networks offer an opportunity for members of the public to comment below content that you have posted on behalf of the College. We would advise against letting this go un-checked, and indeed ideally you should follow and implement a moderation policy.



## *Incidents and response*

The College will act immediately to prevent, as far as reasonably possible, any damage to an individual, their rights or the College's reputation. Any stakeholder or member of the public may report an incident to the College. Minor incidents should be dealt with following discussion with your head of department. Serious incidents should be directed immediately to the Assistant Bursar. Where it appears that a breach has taken place, the Assistant Bursar will review what has happened and decide on the most appropriate and proportionate course of action. Where staff are in receipt of offensive, unacceptable content via social media, this should be reported to a relevant head of department immediately. Where questionable content has been sent to the College, the Assistant Bursar should be informed prior to any response being submitted.

## *Unacceptable Conduct*

Digital communications by staff should be professional and respectful at all times and in keeping with this guidance.

Unacceptable conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Defamation: damaging the reputation of a person or an organisation
- Discrimination: making or showing an unfair or prejudicial distinction between different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of gender reassignment, race, age, sex, sexual preference, disability, religion or belief, being married/in a civil partnership or being pregnant/on maternity leave.
- Political: any content that presents the College as having a particular political viewpoint
- Offensive: profane language or causing someone to feel resentful, upset, or annoyed
- Harassing/bullying: applying aggressive pressure or intimidation
- Pornographic: obscene or sexually explicit videos, photographs, writings
- Proprietary: breach of data protection, communicating trade secrets, pending litigation or disputes, and financial information
- Infringing copyright law: proper copyright and reference laws should be observed when posting online. If you have not taken the photo, created the imagery or written the wording, then always make sure you ask the owner for permission to use it.
- Promoting or inciting criminal extremist behaviour: social media is a tool known to be used by terrorists to encourage others to adopt extreme beliefs or attitudes so caution must be exercised

Staff should not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of colleagues or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff.

Unacceptable conduct will be taken extremely seriously by the College and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant member of staff, and escalated where appropriate. The College will take appropriate action when necessary in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the College will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the College will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the Disciplinary Policy.



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## *Use of social media at work*

The College permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media accounts. However, where we suspect excessive use, and consider this use to be interfering with relevant duties, we may take disciplinary action.

## *Education and training*

From time to time the College will provide staff with additional guidelines and training. Staff who use College social media accounts should seek training on relevant safeguards and acceptable practice.

*H Millward*

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*Approved by: Governing Body    Date: 17 July 2019*