

Social Media Guidance

1: Introduction

- The City College actively encourages students and staff to use social media to enhance and supplement their learning and overall College experience.
- The City College actively uses social media – currently Facebook and Twitter – to promote the College’s activities and to communicate with staff and students.
- However, when someone clearly identifies their association with The City College and/or discusses their work, they are expected to behave appropriately when on the Internet, and in ways that are consistent with the College’s values and policies.

2: Main principles

Staff and students who identify themselves as part of The City College:

- Must not engage in activities on the Internet which might bring The City College into disrepute.
- Must not use the Internet in any way to attack or abuse students, colleagues, tutors or any other staff.
- Must not post derogatory or offensive comments on the Internet.

3: Reputation

- Maintaining the reputation of the College is vital. Our online audiences must be confident in our brand and the integrity of the College as a whole; and therefore it is crucial that contributions to social media from staff and students do not undermine the College’s reputation and ethos.
- If a staff member wishes to set up a social media platform for his or her area of activity within the College then he or she should consult the Director of Studies in the first instance to get advice on branding, tone etc, and to enable the College to keep track of its sanctioned social media platforms.
- Similarly, if a student wishes to set up a social media platform for his or her College activities then in the first instance the student should approach his or her tutor, who will in turn contact the Director of Studies.

4: Keeping students safe

- Part of our College remit is ensuring that staff and students feel safe and secure in and outside of College.
- Staff and students should at all times take effective precautions when using social media to ensure their own personal safety.

- Staff and students should always exercise caution when interacting with and responding to posts on social media sites that could be deemed as contentious.
- Staff and students who use social media on College premises must ensure that this usage complies with the College Computer Access policy, and is used only when permitted by tutors and senior managers.
- Social networking websites allow photographs, videos, personal details and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. However, it may not be appropriate to share College-related information in this way.
- For example, there may be an expectation that photographs of someone taken in College will not appear publicly on the Internet.
- Staff and students should be considerate to their colleagues/ peers and should not post information when they have been asked not to. They should also remove information about a colleague/ peer if that colleague/ peer asks them to do so.
- Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about the City College staff or students on the Internet. This may amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offence.
- The College reserves the right to monitor the usage of social media sites only if there is cause for concern or to prevent crime or to protect the business.
- Given the College's duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015), steps will be taken to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. To meet this duty, social media activity related to The City College must not be used to create, access, store, transmit or download inappropriate materials as defined in this document and under the Prevent legislation (eg. materials concerning extremism, radicalisation, and terrorism). The College reserves the right to monitor, alert and report attempted access to, or dissemination of, such inappropriate material.
- If any inappropriate social media material is identified, it **must** be reported immediately to the Prevent Lead Officer, Principal, or Director of Studies so an investigation can commence.

5: Blogs and personal websites

- When staff and students use their personal blogs to discuss their activities at The City College, they must ensure that confidential information is not revealed. This might include aspects of The City College policy or details of internal College discussions. If in doubt about what might be confidential, staff members must consult the Principal or Director of Studies, and students must consult their tutor, who will in turn consult with the Principal or Director of Studies.

- If a blog makes it clear that the author works for or attends The City College, it should include a simple and visible disclaimer such as “these are my personal views and not those of The City College”.
- Staff members who wish to say that they work for the College should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Principal or Director of Studies.
- If a member of staff or student is using social media in a personal capacity then use of this should be regulated in College time and on College premises – for instance, at lunchtimes or breaks only.
- Personal blogs and websites must not be used to attack or abuse peers/colleagues, or the College and its policies.
- Staff and students should respect the privacy and the feelings of others. It should be noted also that if staff and students break the law on a blog (for example by posting something defamatory), they will be personally responsible.
- If a staff member or student thinks something on their blog or website gives rise to concerns about a conflict of interest, and in particular concerns about impartiality or confidentiality, staff members must consult the Principal or Director of Studies, and students must consult their tutor, who will in turn consult with the Principal or Director of Studies.
- When a staff member or student is contacted by the press about posts on their blog that relate to the College, the Principal or Director of Studies must be consulted immediately.

6: Disciplinary action

If a member of staff or student is found to be engaging in any form of online activity that is deemed as cyber bullying, bringing the reputation of The City College into disrepute, and/or uses the Internet in any way to attack or abuse students or staff members, or any other member of the College community, then that person could face disciplinary action.