



Cheshire College
South & West

Social Media Policy

Key Information	
Policy Reference Number	CCSW - SMP
ELT Post Responsible for Update and Monitoring	Deputy Principal / Deputy CEO
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Date of Next Policy Review	23 June 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cheshire College - South & West recognises the benefits and opportunities which new technologies offer to teaching and learning and encourages the safe and effective use of Social Media for all staff and learners. The College recognises the value that Social Media can have if used in a responsible and professional way. It is recognised that staff are entitled to a private life, the College is committed to maintaining confidentiality and professionalism whilst also upholding its reputation.
- 1.2 Social Media is the term used to describe online tools, websites and interactive media that enables users to interact with others, through sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social Media involves building online communities or networks, that encourage participation, dialogue and involvement. Social Media has become one of the primary communication channels online and is an integral part of the College's marketing strategy.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the use of Social Media for and by the College is as effective as possible and used alongside the Social Media procedures. This Policy has been created to facilitate the use of Social Media to enhance brand reputation and increase awareness of the College's offer amongst prospective and existing learner audiences, communities and wider stakeholders.
- 2.2 This Policy applies to all staff including those employed by the College on full-time, part-time or casual basis and volunteers.
- 2.3 This Policy covers engagement across official College-wide Social Media channels (*which are managed by the Marketing and Schools Partnership department*). It also provides guidance for all staff and learners wishing to create and administer Social Media channels on behalf of the College.
- 2.4 This Policy also aims to ensure that communications across Social Media made on behalf of the College adhere to its responsibilities outlined under legislation. Individuals are personally accountable for their behaviour and may be held liable for any breaches of this Policy.

3. Legislation and Other Relevant Policies

- 3.1 The College will adhere to its obligations under the legislation relevant to the use and monitoring of electronic communications, which are predominantly the:
 - (a) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000;
 - (b) The Telecommunications (*Lawful Business Practice*) (*Interception of Communications*) Regulations 2000;
 - (c) The Communications Act 2003;
 - (d) Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018;
 - (e) The Human Rights Act 1998; and
 - (f) The Defamation Act 1996 and the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 This Policy should not be read in isolation but should be referenced to other relevant College policies and procedures, including:
 - (a) Safeguarding Policy;
 - (b) Online Safety Policy;
 - (c) ICT Policy;
 - (d) Acceptable use of IT Equipment Policy; and
 - (e) Data Protection Policy.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The College has an identified and recognised lead for Social Media, Director of Marketing and Schools Partnership. The procedures outline the level of responsibilities for the lead, the Marketing Team and all College staff.
- 4.2 Line managers in each department are responsible for communicating the Social Media Policy to all relevant individuals within their areas of responsibility.
- 4.3 All departments are required to update/familiarise themselves with the Social Media procedures to ensure that they follow the guidelines appropriately.
- 4.4 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all new staff receive and understand the Social Media Policy.
- 4.5 All staff have responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the Social Media Policy and procedures.
- 4.6 All staff have a responsibility for ensuring learners are aware of the Social Media procedures.

5. Expected Standards of Conduct on Social Media

5.1. Content

- 5.1.1. All content published in relation to the College should provide useful information or insights into the business.
- 5.1.2. To seek approval of a Social Media presence the Social Media procedures need to be adhered to.

5.2. Privacy Settings

- 5.2.1. Default privacy settings for some Social Media websites allow some information to be shared beyond an individual's contacts. In such situations, the user of the site is personally responsible for adjusting the privacy settings for the account. It is vital that staff and learners review their privacy settings for any Social Media sites to control, restrict and guard against who can access the information on those sites. It is important to understand even if privacy and security settings are utilised, anything posted on Social Media sites may be made public by onward transmission.
- 5.2.2. Information available on Social Media sites could be produced as evidence by the College or a member of staff, should it be necessary either as part of College procedures, or in legal proceedings.

5.3. Appropriate Conduct

- 5.3.1. The line between public and private, professional and personal is not always clearly defined when using Social Media. If a staff member identifies themselves as an employee at the College, this has the potential to create perceptions about the College to a range of external audiences and also amongst staff and learners.
- 5.3.2. It is essential that employees keep Cheshire College – South & West related Social Media accounts separate from personal accounts. When communicating either in a professional or personal capacity, within or outside the workplace, the Social Media procedures need to be adhered to.

6. Consequences of Inappropriate Conduct

- 6.1. Any breach of this Policy, including inappropriate conduct as outlined in the Social Media procedures, and any excessive personal use of Social Media websites, will be dealt with in accordance with the College disciplinary procedure.
- 6.2. Disciplinary action may be taken against staff members in line with the College Disciplinary Policy and may also result in the withdrawal of access to Social Media websites/withdrawal of internet access. Persistent breaches of this Policy may lead to dismissal. Serious cases may be treated as gross misconduct, which may result in summary dismissal.