



Cheshire College
South & West

Social Media Policy

Key Information	
Reference Number	CCSW - SMP
ELT Post Responsible for Update and Monitoring	Deputy Principal / Deputy CEO
Published on Website	Yes
Date Approved by ELT	03 June 2025
Date Approved by Governor's Committee	19 June 2025
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1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Cheshire College - South & West recognises that social media has become an influential and important communication tool for learners, staff and the wider community and recognises the value that social media can have if used in a responsible and professional way.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the effective use of social media, ensuring the protection of individual privacy, maintaining professional standards, and upholding and enhancing the College's reputation.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 This Policy applies to all staff including those employed by the College on full-time, part-time or casual basis and volunteers.
- 1.5 This Policy includes engagement across official College-wide social media channels (which are managed by the Marketing Department). It also provides guidance for all staff and learners wishing to create and administer Social Media channels on behalf of the College.
- 1.6 This Policy also aims to ensure that communications across social media platforms made on behalf of the College comply with relevant legislation. Individuals are personally accountable for their actions and may be held liable for any breaches of this Policy.

2. Definition of Social Media

- 2.1. Social media refers to digital platforms and technologies that enable users to create, share, and interact with content and with each other in real-time or asynchronously. These platforms are used for communication, collaboration, marketing, entertainment, and education:
 - 2.1.1. Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn)
 - 2.1.2. Microblogging platforms (e.g. X (formerly Twitter), Bluesky, Threads)
 - 2.1.3. Video and photo sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Instagram)
 - 2.1.4. Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook Messenger)
 - 2.1.5. Blogs, forums, and online communities
- 2.2. Social media involves building online communities, exchanging and sharing information, participation and dialogue. Social media is an integral and valued component of the College's marketing strategy.

3. Legislation and Other Relevant Policies

- 3.1 The College will fulfil its obligations under relevant legislation to ensure the safe and responsible use of social media, including use:
 - (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;
 - (f) The Defamation Act 1996;
 - (g) Equality Act 2010; and
 - (h) Online Safety Act 2023.
- 3.2 This Policy should not be read in isolation but should be referenced to other relevant College policies and procedures, including:

- (a) Staff Code of Conduct;
- (b) Safeguarding Policy;
- (c) Online Safety Policy;
- (d) Staff Disciplinary Policy;
- (e) Artificial Intelligence Policy;
- (f) ICT Policy;
- (g) Acceptable use of IT Equipment Policy; and
- (h) Data Protection Policy.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The College has designated the Director of Marketing and Schools Partnership as the lead for social media. 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 All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the social media policy.

5. Expected Standards of Conduct on Social Media

- 5.1. 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 influence perceptions about the College among external audiences, staff and learners.
- 5.2. It is essential that employees keep Cheshire College related social media accounts separate from personal accounts. When communicating either in a professional or personal capacity, within or outside the workplace.
- 5.3. To protect the College's reputation, and its learners and staff, care must be taken when posting:
 - 5.3.1. Not to breach confidentiality, such as by revealing confidential information about an individual or organisation.
 - 5.3.2. Not to breach copyright laws, such as by using other people's images or written content without permission or failing to give acknowledgement.
 - 5.3.3. Not to discriminate against, bully, or harass any individual or group, such as making offensive or derogatory comments based on protected characteristics.
 - 5.3.4. Not to post anything that doesn't align with Fundamental British Values; this includes not engaging in illegal activity through social media or engaging in any activity that promotes terrorism or extremism.
 - 5.3.5. Not to bring the College into disrepute, such as making defamatory comments about individuals or other groups; or posting inappropriate images or links to inappropriate content.
- 5.4. 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 that even if privacy and security settings are utilised, anything posted on social media sites may be made public by onward transmission.
- 5.5. 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.
- 5.6. Breaches of this policy, including inappropriate conduct, will be addressed in line with the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy.

6. College Official Social Media Accounts

- 6.1. The College Marketing Team maintain and retain control of all official College accounts on appropriate social media platforms.
- 6.2. Any additional accounts that use the College's identity must be approved by the Director of Marketing and Schools Partnerships.
- 6.3. The Marketing Team will grant or remove access to College social media accounts at their discretion, on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.4. Staff can contribute to the College's social media activities by submitting photos and videos to the Marketing Team. Staff can also contribute by writing blogs, sharing industry insights, and notifying of upcoming events, which must be shared with the marketing team using appropriate communications.
- 6.5. Any additional accounts that use the College's identity must be approved by the Director of Marketing and Schools Partnerships.
- 6.6. Additional accounts must have at least one Marketing member as an administrator.

7. Learner Consent

- 7.1. All learners must complete the College's model release form before any detailed case studies, photographs or videos are published on social media.
- 7.2. The exception to this is large events, such as open days, results days, graduation, and freshers' fairs, where messages should be clearly visible advising that images will be taken for promotional purposes, which could include social media. The Marketing and Recruitment Manager is responsible for ensuring this is implemented.
- 7.3. For general group imagery and activity shots to be used on social media, verbal consent will be requested as a minimum.
- 7.4. Any photographs sent to the marketing team, should include confirmation of verbal or written consent. All staff should inform learners of how the image will be used and give learners the option to opt-out or move away ahead of time.
- 7.5. Staff should not share with anyone, including the Marketing Team, any images whereby consent has not been collected.