



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Last Review:	September 2022
Approved by Governors:	October 2021
Next Review:	October 2024
Member of Staff Responsible:	Deputy Principal/ Head of Information Systems

Vision

Loreto College is centred in God, rooted in Christ and animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, the founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our vision is that it will be an educational community where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God; a community where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a better world.

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that staff use of social media - on College and personal accounts - is responsible, professional and respectful. In particular, use should:

- reflect 'safer internet' practices
- not bring the College into disrepute
- not bring the member of staff into disrepute
- not expose the College to legal liability
- minimise risks associated with the personal use of social media
- reflect the College's standard of behaviour stated in the Guidance for working with Young People and Staff in Education document and the College's Disciplinary Procedure: Misconduct

General Social Media Use

This policy applies to all staff and relates to the use of social media¹ whilst an employee at Loreto College. The College cannot and does not want to restrict staff in their personal use of social media. All staff are encouraged to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner at all times.

Responsibility

Boundaries for social contact relating to work need to be clear, and the College wants to ensure that staff are aware of the impact that the use of social media could have on their own image and that of the College. Therefore, with the exception of any centrally administered College accounts, Loreto College has a policy of not communicating with students on social media (this includes not having

¹ Examples of social media may include blogs, wikis, social networking, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chatrooms, instant messenger and many others.

students as 'friends'). In addition, any staff reference to Loreto College in any personal social networking communications should be discreet and respectful: on-line behaviour, like off-line behaviour, reflects on the individual and the College. Staff must not set up a personal social network account using their College email address.

The College has a number of official social media accounts which are used to communicate with current and prospective students, their parents and carers, partner organisations, the media, and other organisations of interest to the College. When using College social media and updating the College website, staff must ensure that material is honest and accurate and reflects the values of the College. Any inappropriate or ill-judged material presented on-line in reference to Loreto College by any member of staff may damage the College. It is the responsibility of every staff member to adhere to College policy; failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Social media enables a message to reach the widest audience. Whenever a member of staff uses social media they should think about the message and how others may react. A member of staff may wish to share where they work in a discreet and respectful, professional manner², but they are not permitted to publish work pictures or material or to bring the College into disrepute. Staff should think through their reasons for posting and any possible implications for themselves and for the College. It is a useful guideline to remember that behaviour online should not be different from behaviour offline.

Staff Official Use of Social Media

College staff should note the following:

- Do not communicate with students on social media, other than via centrally administered College accounts, and do not have students as social networking 'friends'
- If communicating online via a Loreto College account then be conscious of your professional reputation and that of the college; be professional and courteous, and maintain the highest standards of language and communication
- References to Loreto College in any social networking communication should be professional and courteous; staff should be mindful of their own professional reputation and that of the College.

The College reserves the right to monitor staff's internet social network activity. Any staff becoming aware of activity by a colleague that could be deemed distasteful or damaging to the College should report it to a member of the SLT.

All college owned computers including laptops have device monitoring software installed which alerts an external team of trained Safeguarding professionals to potential safeguarding issues. This enables the monitoring of college computer usage both on premises and remotely. The college uses additional technologies to generate safeguarding alerts to the safeguarding team.

College Assets

The use of College assets (computer, internet access, email, etc.) is intended for purposes relevant to the responsibilities assigned to each member of staff. Staff are allowed, a reasonable and limited amount of use of College assets for personal internet use, including connecting to social media.

² This may be on their LinkedIn profile.

Inaccurate or defamatory content

Staff who participate in online activity deemed by the Principal not to be in the best interest of Loreto College will be subject to disciplinary action.

Off limits material

The following items are off-limits for social networking, even within private messages between staff that have authorised access to the information. Not adhering to these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

Intellectual property, staff or student data

Staff must not use social media to discuss information relating to the College's intellectual property, and College/student data.

Financial and commercially sensitive information

The College's financial data must be communicated through mechanisms managed internally by the College.

Company sensitive matters

Discussion and sharing of sensitive College information via social media is not permitted: this includes proprietary information such as restructures, strategic decisions or other announcements deemed inappropriate for uncoordinated public exchange.

Referring to students and members of staff

Loreto College's relationships with students and members of staff are valuable. A thoughtless or misinterpreted comment can be damaging to the individual and to the College. It is important to treat colleagues and students respectfully.

Copyright and Other Legal Issues

The College requires that employees comply with the law (further detail of relevant legislation can be found at Appendix A below):

- With regard to copyright and plagiarism, it is illegal to copy all or part of a copyrighted work
- There is legislation against libel and defamation of character. Defamatory statements can lead to lawsuits against the author of the statement and could also bring the College into disrepute
- Legislation against bullying and harassment, malicious communications, gender, equality and discrimination, makes the individual liable and would bring themselves and the College into disrepute
- College staff should be aware of the need to ensure they do not disclose student data or personal information.

Logos and Trademarks

Loreto College logos and trademarks may be used on College accounts but may not be used on any other social media.

Related College Documents

- Disciplinary Procedure: Misconduct
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
- Guidance for Working with Young People and Staff in Education
- Staff and Governors ICT User Agreement
- BYOD Agreement

Appendix A - Relevant Legislation

- A. Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988** – makes it illegal to copy all, or a substantial part of a copyrighted work.

- B. Malicious Communications Act 1988** – makes it illegal to send an indecent, offensive, or threatening letters, electronic communication or other article to another person.
- C. Communications Act 2003 and the Harassment Act 1997** – makes it illegal to send a message which is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or sending a false message by means of or persistently making use of the Internet for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.
- D. Data Protection Act 1998** – makes it illegal to disclose personal information such as student data, images, and personal information, such as email addresses and addresses, unless permission has been granted specifically for that purpose.
- E. Computer Misuse Act 1990** – makes it illegal to access a computer (including a website social media account) without authority (permission) and/ or to alter or erase material on that account.
- F. Protection of Children Act 1999** – makes it illegal to take, permit to be taken, make, possess, show, distribute or advertise indecent images of children in the United Kingdom.