



**Buckinghamshire  
College Group**

# **Social Media Reputational Management Policy 2017/18**

Responsible Officer:	Director of Marketing
Date:	September 2017
Review date:	September 2018
Policy available:	Staff Intranet site

# Social Media Reputational Management Policy

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### 1. Introduction

Social media is a rapidly expanding communication platform that has many positive aspects and is recognised as a useful and powerful tool for promoting the College and its activities. Young people are a key target audience for the College and this age group embraces social media and is particularly influenced by peer-to-peer recommendation. So it is very important that the College is effectively represented on social media sites and staff are encouraged to participate and interact on such sites, should they wish to, promoting the College in a positive and responsible way.

### 2. Scope

The College's e-Safety policy deal in detail with the safety aspects of online interactions for staff and students, including on social media.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the guidelines for students and staff using social media in terms of managing and upholding the College's reputation.

This policy provides guidance regarding the use of social media through the College's network, systems or equipment and the use of social media to represent or discuss matters related to Buckinghamshire College Group and/or members of the Buckinghamshire College Group community.

The Social Media Reputational Management Policy applies to all staff employed at Buckinghamshire College Group on full-time, part-time, fractional, variable hours, agency and casual or any other type of contract.

This policy also applies to all College students.

The Social Media Reputational Management Policy applies to all forms of Social Media and also all forms of online and digital communications and includes mobile phone communications and texts. The Policy also covers online communication on College IT systems and non-College IT systems.

### 3. Definition

Social media is the term given to websites which allow users to participate in peer to peer interactions and share content online. These websites can be used to share information, opinions, knowledge and interests but also sharing photographs and videos. Examples of social media are: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, LinkedIn, Bebo, Pinterest, Oovoo, YouTube, Flickr (this is not an exhaustive list and new sites appear regularly).

#### **4. Administration of Buckinghamshire College Group Social Media Sites**

The Buckinghamshire College Group Marketing Department operates the main College social media sites. These sites are updated regularly with fresh content and are used to communicate to students, partner organisations and the wider community.

However, the College recognises and states that marketing is the responsibility of all staff, so staff are encouraged to operate additional social media sites, specific to particular courses, subject areas or events.

Any site linked to Buckinghamshire College Group in any way is representing the College and as such it is important that clear guidelines are set and observed. It will be the responsibility of the Marketing Department to oversee ALL social media activity linked to the College as follows:

- All social media sites or pages linked in any way to the College should be set up and approved by Marketing and linked to the official Buckinghamshire College Group pages. On Facebook, pages should be set up as a “Page” rather than a “Group”
- Pages defined as being linked to the College would include those that: Use College logos or photos of the College; are based on a particular College course, subject area or event; or have a membership composed mainly of College staff or students or former students
- Marketing will hold the passwords for all sites linked to the College to avoid problems that can arise when members of staff leave
- All sites or pages linked to the College should have a designated ‘Owner’ registered with Marketing
- Passwords for any pages or groups already set up must be passed to Marketing on request
- Social media pages should be updated regularly as pages with no recent activity give a poor impression of the College. As a guide, pages should be updated at least fortnightly. Where this is not happening Marketing will contact the owner of the page to agree the best way forward
- Dormant or unused social media sites linked with the College will be closed down

#### **5. Guidelines for Staff using Social Media Sites**

This policy sets out guidelines for staff, below, for the use of social media with regard to managing the College’s reputation. Guidelines and advice for online safety are covered in the separate e-safety policy.

These guidelines in this policy apply to: Posting to any Buckinghamshire College Group social media site; communicating with members of the Buckinghamshire College Group community including staff or students; discussing the College on any site; whether at College and using the College network and equipment or through a personal account or using a personal phone, computer or other device from any other location.

Staff should follow the guidelines below at all times:

- Be professional; as a Buckinghamshire College Group employee you are an ambassador for the organisation. Protect the Buckinghamshire College Group brand and values at all times, do not make derogatory comments about Buckinghamshire College Group products, services, management, employees or systems
- Discussions on social media sites linked to Buckinghamshire College Group should be appropriate and be College or Course related

- Staff should not comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties the College may be in dispute with or anything that may be considered a crisis situation.
- Do not upload College-related content to video/photo sharing sites (e.g. YouTube) unless it is done via the Buckinghamshire College Group official channel. Contact Marketing to do this
- Do not post a person's photograph or video image without first obtaining permission and signed release forms from anyone depicted in the photograph or video (any photographs of children and young people under the age of 16 should have parental permission) Blank release forms may be requested from the Marketing team and should be promptly returned after they are signed
- Protect confidential and sensitive information at all times (e.g. referring to sickness absence of others etc.)
- Whenever appropriate, link back to information posted on the College website instead of duplicating content. For assistance with linking to the website please contact the Marketing team
- Remember that statutory regulations and Buckinghamshire College Group policies including inappropriate conduct such as sexual (or other) harassment, bullying, discrimination, defamation, infringement of copyright and trademark rights, data protection and unauthorised disclosure of student records and other confidential and private information, will apply to communications by Buckinghamshire College Group students and staff through social media
- When posting on sites linked to Buckinghamshire College Group or when mentioning or referring to Buckinghamshire College Group on social media do not:
  - Use foul or abusive language
  - Harass, threaten, insult, defame or bully another person
  - Refer to any other member of the Buckinghamshire College Group community, whether student or staff, in a derogatory or insulting manner
  - Refer to the College, its courses or facilities or any other aspect of its offering, in a derogatory or insulting manner
  - Post or comment in any way that reflects poorly on the College or is deemed to interfere with the conduct of College business
- Staff should not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites in a personal capacity. They should ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their other duties as this is likely to have a detrimental effect on productivity
- Any breach in this Policy could result in an investigation and disciplinary procedures under the staff disciplinary policy. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing reputational damage to the College, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to dismissal.

## **6. Guidelines for Students when using Social Media**

As part of our duty of care to our students, the College sets out guidelines, in the separate e-safety policy, for students when using social media.

Guidelines in this policy refer to students' obligations in terms of protecting the College's reputation and good name. These guidelines are included in the student handbook and the purpose of including them here is to make staff aware of the guidelines and to encourage staff to discuss them with students.

Students should follow the guidelines below at all times:

- Do not use social media to harass, threaten, insult, defame or bully another person or entity; to violate any College policy; or to engage in any unlawful act, including but not limited to gambling, identity theft or other types of fraud
- Participating in social media use as part of a College or course activity is optional. Students may opt out at any time
- Discussions on Buckinghamshire College Group branded social media should be appropriate and College or Course related
- When posting on sites linked to Buckinghamshire College Group or when mentioning or referring to Buckinghamshire College Group on social media do not:
  - Use foul or abusive language
  - Harass, threaten, insult, defame or bully another person
  - Refer to any other member of the Buckinghamshire College Group community, whether student or staff, in a derogatory or insulting manner
  - Refer to the College, its courses or facilities or any other aspect of its offering, in a derogatory or insulting manner
  - Post or comment in any way that reflects poorly on the College or is deemed to interfere with the conduct of College business
- Posting of messages that are deemed inappropriate will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.
- Copies of inappropriate posts may be reported to parents/ guardians and the appropriate authorities. Before you post a message, think carefully about its content and ask yourself how you would feel if you received that message or know that it may be disclosed in court
- Any form of abuse or cyber-bullying will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure
- Students should report any abusive behaviour immediately to the Safeguarding Officer on the confidential helpline, 07920072463 or email [confidentialhelpline@buckscollegegroun.ac.uk](mailto:confidentialhelpline@buckscollegegroun.ac.uk)

## 7. Responsibilities

### All staff are responsible for:

- Following the guidelines set out in the policy
- Communicating the policy to students

### Curriculum Directors and Curriculum Managers are responsible for

- Ensuring staff are aware of the policy and follow the guidelines
- Ensuring students in their area are aware of the guidelines
- Following up on any breach of the guidelines by students and ensuring that effective disciplinary action is taken

### The Marketing Team is responsible for:

- Monitoring social media sites and reporting any concerns or breaches of the policy to the Director of Marketing and Student Engagement
- Monitoring 'official' Buckinghamshire College Group sites to ensure regular updates

### The Director of Marketing is responsible for:

- Passing any reported breaches of the policy to the relevant department Director
- Reporting to the Operational Group

*This policy cross-references with the following documents:*

- *The Buckinghamshire College Group E-Safety Policy*
- *The Buckinghamshire College Group Marketing Strategy*
- *The Buckinghamshire College Group Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure*
- *The Buckinghamshire College Group Student Handbook*
- *The Buckinghamshire College Group Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure*
- *The Buckinghamshire College Group Student Code of Conduct*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Policy*
- *Equality and Diversity Policy*

*Copies of all documents can be obtained by accessing the staff intranet.*

**Checklist:**

**Impact on Students/Staff:** This policy outlines College guidelines for staff and students when dealing with social media

**Impact on Diversity:** The policy includes details on how to deal with cyberbullying

**Impact on PREVENT:** The policy outlines staff responsibilities re PREVENT in relation to social media

**Impact on Health & Safety:** None

**Impact on Data Protection/Freedom of Information:** Outlines staff and student guidelines for protection of personal data online

**Link with Strategic Plan:** helping to achieve excellence

**Communication/Consultation Plan:** The updated policy will be emailed to all curriculum managers

**Process of review:** Policy is reviewed annually

**Process of review of effectiveness:** As above

**Legal authority:** None

**Responsibility for maintaining this policy rests with:** Director of Marketing

**Links to other policies:** E-Safety Policy; Compliments, Comments and complaints Policy and Procedure;

Complaints Flowchart; Student and Staff Disciplinary Procedures and Grievance Procedure.