



## **JP ACADEMY**

45-56 Bridge Street, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 2EL

Tel: 01494 510597

Email: info@jpacademy.co.uk

# **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Scope
3. Definition
4. Guidelines for staff using social media sites
5. Guidelines for students using social media sites
6. Responsibilities

### **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.

However, there are some dangers inherent in social media. A careless post could bring the College into disrepute and sharing of personal details or opinions online can lead to online victimisation or cyberbullying. Therefore it is important for the College as a responsible employer and a forward-thinking organisation to provide guidance for staff using social media. The College also has a duty of care to its students and this policy also sets out the guidelines for them which are included in the student handbook.

### **2. Scope**

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 Aylesbury College and/or members of the Aylesbury College community.

The Social Media Policy applies to all staff employed at Aylesbury College 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 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, MySpace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Twitter, Wikipedia, Instagram, Pinterest, Oovoo, YouTube, Flickr (this is not an exhaustive list and new sites appear regularly).

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



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This policy sets out guidelines for staff, below, for the use of social media. These guidelines apply to: Posting to any Aylesbury College social media site; communicating with members of the Aylesbury College 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 an Aylesbury College employee you are an ambassador for the organisation. Protect the Aylesbury College brand and values at all times, do not make derogatory comments about Aylesbury College products, services, management, employees or systems
- Never have a “friend” relationship with a student online, where personal details are shared
- Staff should not share any personal information online including home address, personal telephone numbers, personal email addresses or date of birth
- Discussions on social media sites linked to Aylesbury College 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 to video/photo sharing sites (e.g. YouTube) unless it is done via the Aylesbury College 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 Aylesbury College 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 Aylesbury College students and staff through social media
- When posting on sites linked to Aylesbury College or when mentioning or referring to Aylesbury College 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 Aylesbury College 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



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- 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, below, for students when using social media. 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 enter into a “friends” relationship online with someone you do not know
- 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
- Set up privacy settings carefully, ensure you are not sharing any information that you do not want to
- Participating in social media use as part of a College or course activity is optional. Students may opt out at any time
- Discussions on Aylesbury College branded social media should be appropriate and College or Course related
- When posting on sites linked to Aylesbury College or when mentioning or referring to Aylesbury College 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 Aylesbury College 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@aylesbury.ac.uk](mailto:confidentialhelpline@aylesbury.ac.uk)

### 7. Cyber Bullying

- Cyberbullying is where someone, or a group of people, threaten and/or harass someone using social media, email or mobile phone. Where employees are subject to such practice they are advised to respond as follows:-



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- If the originator of the material is an employee they should consider resolving the matter through the Grievance Procedures. The College reserves the right to investigate and manage any complaints under the Disciplinary Procedures where a breach of conduct is alleged.
- If the originator of the material is a student they should report this to their line manager and the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Students' Disciplinary Procedure.
- If the originator of the material is a contractor, client or visitor to the College they should immediately report this to their line manager who will seek advice from the HR Business Partner.
- If the originator of the material has no connection to the College they should consider report the matter to the police.

### **8. 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' Aylesbury College sites to ensure regular updates

#### **The Director of Marketing and Student Engagement is responsible for:**

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

#### **Policy Reviewed Date: 25/08/17**

The School Manager of our Academy is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy and for additional policies that are relevant to safeguarding and child protection.

**Reviewed by the School Manager**