



Social Media Communication Policy

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1. Document Purpose and Scope

This Policy sets out how William College manages, monitors, and governs social media activity across all platforms. It establishes clear expectations for staff, students, and authorised representatives to ensure that all social media use supports the College's reputation, legal obligations, and strategic objectives.

This Policy applies to:

- All official (corporate) College social media accounts, including central, departmental, course-related, and campaign-specific accounts.
- Personal social media accounts where staff or students' reference, represent, or are identifiable as being associated with the College.
- Student-led or representative accounts, including those operated by student ambassadors, course representatives, or student bodies where the College is referenced or promoted.

The Policy applies regardless of device, location, or time of use where there is a connection to the College.

This Policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy, Data Protection Policy, Staff and Student Disciplinary Procedures, and the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.

2. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the below terms will mean:

Term	Description
College's social media accounts	Official accounts managed by William College, including corporate channels, programme pages, and sanctioned groups.
Personal social media accounts	Accounts maintained by individual staff or students, including those used for professional engagement.
Authorised user	A member of staff who has been formally assigned responsibility for operating an institutional account in connection with their duties.

3. Governance, Roles and Responsibilities

Institutional social media accounts may only be operated by staff authorised by the Marketing Officer and the Admissions Officer. This approach ensures a unified and professional presence across all platforms.

3.1 Responsibilities

3.1.1 Academic Partnership and Development Manager

- Provides strategic direction for social media activity, ensuring alignment with the College's Communication Principles, the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom and consumer protection legislation; oversees campaign planning.
- Manages routine publishing and ensures timely follow-up on social media enquiries.

- Jointly with Admissions Officer: Oversee enquiries received via Facebook, X, and Instagram etc.

3.1.2 Student Recruitment Team

Responsible for handling WhatsApp enquiries.

4. College Social Media Accounts

4.1 Creation of Accounts

The College social media accounts may only be established by the Academic Partnership and Development Manager and the Student Recruitment and Admissions Assistant Manager. Other members of staff are not permitted to create accounts in the College's name without prior authorisation by either of the above. Proposals for new accounts should be discussed with the relevant managers to ensure alignment with strategic priorities and resource capacity.

4.2 Content Standards and Moderation

All College social media content represents William College and must be accurate, respectful, lawful, and consistent with the College's mission and values. While the College upholds freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law, it will not tolerate content that is unlawful, discriminatory, harassing, or that promotes or incites violence, terrorism, or hatred.

Comments breaching these principles will be removed, and users may be blocked. Where necessary, issues will be escalated in line with Section 5 (Prevent duties) and the College's disciplinary procedures.

5. Prevent Duties

In line with regulatory¹ and statutory requirements (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015²), William College has a duty to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism and to refer concerns to the appropriate authorities. These responsibilities are balanced with our commitment to uphold freedom of speech, protect personal data, and ensure equality, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, and the Equality Act 2010.

The College's social media accounts are monitored to support these obligations. Staff who identify potential illegal terrorist activity or other concerns about students must report it to the Prevent Lead.

6. Use of Personal Social Media Accounts

Social media posts are considered part of the public record, regardless of whether the account remains active.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/student-protection-and-support/counter-terrorism-the-prevent-duty/>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents>

6.1 Use During Working Hours

Staff may access personal accounts for work-related purposes during working hours where justified by business needs. Personal use should be restricted to breaks or other non-working periods.

6.2 Expressing View about the College

Staff must not at any point present, imply or allow inference that their personal opinions reflect the official position of William College. Where appropriate, a disclaimer should be used, such as:

“The views expressed are my own and do not reflect those of my employer.”

The Senior Leadership and Management Team (SLMT) may request, where reasonable, that staff avoid posting on specific subjects. Posts that are defamatory, damage the College’s reputation, or breach this Policy may lead to disciplinary action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

7. Students’ Use of Social Media

Student social media activity is part of the wider public domain and may have consequences for both personal and college reputation. Posting or interacting with unlawful or discriminatory material may result in disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures, harm future employment prospects, damage the College’s reputation, and expose the individual to legal proceedings.

8. Safe and Responsible Use - All Users

When using social media in connection with the William College, whether through official or personal accounts, users must not:

- Publish material that could create legal or reputational risk for themselves or William College.
- Share inappropriate or unlawful content, including explicit images, discriminatory remarks, or material promoting criminal activity, terrorism, violence, or illegal substances.
- Engage in harassment, bullying, or abusive behaviour online.
- Use college accounts to express unsolicited personal views on political, social, or religious matters.
- Post content that could damage the College’s reputation or relationships.
- Engage with competitors only in a professional, respectful, and non-confrontational manner.
- Discuss colleagues, students, or external partners without their consent.
- Circulate spam, junk messages, or chain communications.

Further guidance is available in [Appendix A](#) and the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.

9. Copyright

William College upholds copyright legislation and expects staff and students to do the same. Social media must not be used to publish or share copyrighted material such as software, music, films, or other media, without the proper permissions from the rights holder(s). Sharing links to illegal or pirated content is strictly forbidden.

Users may share content through official sharing features provided by websites, provided this complies with the platform's terms and conditions.

10. Security and Data Protection

Use of social media must comply with UK GDPR and the College's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy. Users should be alert to potential security threats and take all reasonable steps to protect sensitive College information as well as their own personal data.

10.1 Maintain Confidentiality

- Do not disclose confidential or commercially sensitive information belonging to the College or third parties.
- Avoid processing or sharing personal data in ways that contravene College policy.

10.2 Protect Social Accounts

- Secure accounts with strong passwords and enable Multiple Factor Authentication (MFA) on College-managed devices.
- Update credentials promptly when staff responsibilities change.
- Remove linked personal accounts and review permissions regularly.
- Coordinate with IT Services for security compliance.

10.3 Avoid Social Scams

- Stay alert to phishing and fraudulent activity.
- Verify requests for sensitive information through official channels.
- Do not click on suspicious links or attachments.

11. Monitoring and Compliance

William College IT systems are intended for legitimate business purposes. The College reserves the right to monitor social media use on its networks and devices, with authorisation from the Strategic Leadership Team.

Social media content created, sent, or received via College systems may constitute an official record and must be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Policy. College accounts will be routinely monitored and audited by the Marketing Manager.

11.1 Consequences of Breach

Intentional breaches of this Policy may result in disciplinary action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure or Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. Any concerns relating to Prevent duties will be referred to the Safeguarding Lead [Prevent Lead].

12. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership and Management Team. Substantive amendments require SLMT approval.

13. Related Policies and Documents

Related regulations, policies and procedures include:

- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Information Control Procedures
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Staff Disciplinary
- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Student Code of Conduct

14. Appendix A: Tips for Social Media Usage

Social media is a powerful tool for engagement when used effectively. These tips promote safe, professional, and impactful use:

- i. Use official branding consistently.
- ii. Reflect the College's mission and values in all content.
- iii. Avoid overly promotional language; prioritise, accuracy, relevance and authenticity.
- iv. Maintain clarity, professionalism, and credibility at all times.
- v. Protect privacy by securing consent before sharing personal content.
- vi. Review all content for accuracy and appropriateness before posting.
- vii. Take responsibility for errors and correct them promptly.
- viii. Engage respectfully and in line with College values.
- ix. Address negative feedback constructively and escalate where necessary.
- x. Innovate responsibly and evaluate outcomes.