

Social Media Policy and Procedure



Date Approved:	19/08/2024	Approved By:	Head of Centre		
Next Review Due Date:	19/08/2025	Manual ID Number:	BSA028	Version No:	2
Author and Responsible Manager:	Head of Centre				
Applicable to:	Staff				
Publication:	Staff SharePoint				

Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes on Revisions

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Policy brief and Scope

This policy is intended to minimize the risks of social media which can impact the wellbeing of staff, students, and the reputation of Blackpool Skills Academy (BSA). This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purpose, during working hours and in your own time to the extent that it may affect the business of BSA.

Whilst we recognize the benefits which may be gained from appropriate use of social media, it is also important to be aware that it poses significant risk not just to the company but also to everyone's safety. These risks include disclosure of confidential information and intellectual property, damage to our reputation and the risk of legal claims. To minimize these risks this policy sets out the rules applying to the use of social media.

This policy covers all staff members and students, a breach of this policy could result in disciplinary actions or dismissal.

Principles

- Employees should never represent themselves or the training group in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.
- Use common sense and common courtesy. Employees should ask permission to publish or report conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the training group. The BSA's privacy, confidentiality and legal guidelines for external communication should not be violated by an employee's effort to be transparent.
- Where appropriate, BSA reserves the right to monitor use of social media platform's and take appropriate actions to protect against any misuse that may be harmful to the training group.
- If an employee or student's use of social media is considered to be derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, creating liability for the training group, bringing the training group into disrepute. This may include comments, videos, or photographs, which have been posted on social media sites about the training group, students, staff, or managers.
- An employee should not engage in illegal activity through social media or engage in an activity that promotes terrorism. The very fact of possessing or disseminating terrorist material may be sufficient to warrant an investigation by the police and a member of staff.
- Blackpool Skills Academy may require employees to remove social media

postings which as deemed to constitute a breach of these standards and failure to comply with such a request may, in itself, result in disciplinary actions.

- Employees are responsible for their words and actions in an online environment. They are therefore advised to consider whether any comments, photographs, or videos that they are about to post on a social networking site is something that they want pupils, colleagues, other employees to read. If in doubt, do not post it.

Responsibilities of managers

- Managers are responsible for addressing any concerns and/or questions employees may have on the use of social media.
- Managers also have the responsibility of operating within the boundaries of this policy and ensuring that all staff and students understand the standards of behaviour expected of them.

Responsibilities of everyone

- To be honest about who you are.
- Clarity that your opinions are your own.
- Have respect and humility in all forms of communication.
- Have good judgement in sharing only public information – including financial data.
- Awareness that what you say is permanent.
- To never impersonate somebody else.
- To hold themselves personally responsible for their words and actions online.

Definition of social media

Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. It allows people to share information, ideas, and views. Examples of social medias include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogs, Myspace, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Employees should not upload any content on to social media sites that:

- Is confidential to BSA or its staff.
- Amounts to bullying
- Amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimization
- Brings BSA into disrepute
- Contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images, or video clips.
- Undermines the reputation of BSA and/ or individuals
- Is defamatory or knowingly false
- Breaches copy right
- Is in any way unlawful.

Employees and students should be aware of both professional and social

boundaries and should not therefore accept or invite 'friend' requests from pupils or ex-pupils under the age of 18, or from parents on their personal social media accounts such as Facebook. All communication with parent via social media should be through BSA's social media accounts. Employees should note that the use of social media accounts during lesson time is not permitted.

Safeguarding

The use of social networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people.

Potential risks can include, not are not limited to:

- Online bullying.
- Grooming, exploitation or stalking.
- Exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language.
- Encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking.

In order to mitigate these risks, there are steps you can take to promote safety online:

- You should not use any information in an attempt to locate or meet a child.
- Ensure that any messages, photos, or information comply with existing policies.

Authenticity

When on social media sites, keeping your personal details to a minimum but honest. Having privacy settings in place could prevent students from gaining access to your personal information on your social media accounts.

Reporting safeguarding concerns:

- Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the lead safeguarding officer at BSA.
- Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the student.
- With regards to personal safeguarding, you should report any harassment or abuse you receive online while using your work accounts.

Reporting, Responding, and recording cyberbullying incidents

Staff should never engage with cyberbullying incidents. If in the course of your employment with BSA, you discover a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate, or inflammatory written material relating to you, or images of you which have been taken and/or which are being used without your permission, you should immediately report this to a senior member of staff at BSA.

Staff should keep any records of the abuse such as texts, emails, voicemails, websites, or social media. If appropriate, screen prints of messages or web pages could be taken and the time, date, and address of site should be recorded.

Action by employer

- Following a report of inappropriate use of social media, the senior manager will conduct a prompt investigation.
- If in the course of investigation, it is found that a pupil submitted the material to the website, that pupil will be disciplined in line with the center's behaviour policy.
- The senior manager, where appropriate, will approach the website hosts to ensure the material is either amended or removed as a matter of urgency, IE within 24 hours. If the website requires the individual who is complaining to do so personally, the school will give their full support and assistance.
- If the material is threatening and/or intimidating, senior management will, with the persons consent, report the matter to the police.
- The member of staff or student will be offered full support and appropriate stress counselling.

Breaches of this policy

Any member of staff or students suspected of committing a breach of this policy (or if complaints are received about unacceptable use of social networking that has potentially breached this policy) will be investigated in accordance with the Training group's bullying procedure. The member of staff or student will be expected to co-operate with the Training groups investigation which may involve:

- Handing over relevant passwords and login details.
- Printing a copy or obtaining a screenshot of the alleged unacceptable content.
- Determining that the responsibility or source of the content was in fact the accused.

The seriousness of the breach will be considered including the nature of the content, how long the content remained visible on the social media site, the potential for recirculation by others and the impact on BSA or the individuals concerned. Staff should be aware that actions online can be in breach of the harassment/ equality policies and any online breaches of these policies may also be treated at conduct issues in accordance with the disciplinary action, the consequences will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures. Serious breaches could result in the dismissal of the employee or student. Where conduct is unlawful, BSA will report the matter to the police and other external agencies.

Monitoring and review

If the manager reasonably believes that an employee has breached this policy, from time to time the Centre will monitor or record communications that are sent or received from within the BSA network.

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis and, in accordance with the

following, on an as-and-when-required basis:

- Legislative changes
- Good practice guidance
- Case law
- Significant incidents reported

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may also, after consultation with the trade unions, be amended from time to time by BSA.

Legislation

Acceptable use of social networking must comply with the UK law. In applying this policy, BSA will adhere to its rights, responsibilities, and duties in accordance with the following:

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- The Equality Act 2010
- Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure
- Student Misconduct Procedure

The internet is a fast-moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. When using social media, staff and students should be aware of the potential impact on themselves and the employer, whether for work-related or personal use; whether during working hours or otherwise; or whether social media is accessed using the employer's equipment or using the staff's equipment. Staff should use discretion and common sense when engaging in online communication.