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**How to deal with inappropriate comments on social media**

In the event that a member of staff makes inappropriate comments or posts on a social media site, consider the following:

* Could the nature of the post amount to a breach of the Dignity at Work Policy? Could the comment bring the University into disrepute? If so, this may amount to a disciplinary matter. Discuss with HR whether it is appropriate to commence an investigation.
* Does the post breach any confidentiality regarding the University or their role? If so, this may amount to a breach of the contact of employment, which may also be a disciplinary matter.
* Could the post breach copyright, amount to defamation or break the law in other ways? This may also amount to a disciplinary offence and have personal consequences for the individual.

In all cases:

* A copy of the post or posts should be made (eg a screen shot).
* The manager should approach the member of staff and advise them that the comment has been noted and is considered to be inappropriate. If an investigation is to be carried out, the individual should also be advised.
* Consider whether the member of staff should be asked to remove the comment.
* Consider whether it is necessary to write a letter to the member of staff putting them on notice of potential infringements (eg if the material is defamatory)
* Take advice from HR or the legal team where appropriate.

Remember that members of staff have the right to free speech and academic freedom. This may mean that they expressly disagree with the University. This guidance is not intended to limit freedom of expression and comment, but address issues that might cause offence, breach confidentiality or copyright or our policies on Dignity at Work.

Note – a disclaimer that the views on a social media site are an individual’s own will not preclude the University from taking appropriate action under its policies.