**Social Media**

The purpose of these notes is to provide members of staff and managers with guidance on the acceptable and effective use of social media, both personally and at work.

Social media can present members of staff with significant benefits. Social media can have a positive impact on individual’s ability to do their job, from presenting learning opportunities, building and maintaining professional relationships, and making connections across the industry and professions.

The University believes that members of staff should be permitted and enabled to use social media at work, in accordance with our policy and guidelines.

## Advice before using social media

For advice on using social media, terminology, useful tools, developing a social media strategy and examples of good social media practice, please see additional resources on StaffNet.

Prior to using social media for any purpose, it is recommended that staff familiarise themselves with the platforms they intend to use and ensure they understand the basic functionally and etiquette.

## General Advice

Always keep in mind that social media platforms are a public space accessible by staff, managers, stakeholders and members of the public. Whilst social media platforms provide options around privacy settings, information can be copied and redistributed. Nothing shared via social media can ever be kept truly private.

Staff are required under their contract of employment to give due regard to the interests of the University, and this also applies to social media use.

When using social media for any purpose, staff should consider the following:

* Protecting your reputation and professionalism – consider carefully the content that you post / share and who you engage with.
* Being transparent and honest. Declare any vested interests. It is acceptable to say that you work for the University but always be clear that you are expressing your own views and not those of the University.
* Consider confidentiality – never post any information that could be confidential or proprietary. Never discuss any sensitive information about the University, its students or staff. Respect copyright and data protection legislation.
* Being respectful of others. Do not post information that could be seen as offensive, sensitive or inflammatory. Do not use inappropriate language. Remember our policies on dignity at work.

## Personal Use of Social Media

When it comes to specifically using social media for personal use, staff should consider the following:

* Making it clear as necessary and depending on the platform that views expressed are personal and do not represent the University.
* Not saying anything that might bring the University into disrepute.
* Ensuring that social media (including frequency of use) use does not impact on the individual’s role and commitments to the University.
* Ensuring that any use, even outside of work or on personal devices, still meets with the values and standards of the University.
* Correcting any mistakes promptly.

In respect of specifically discussing the University on any social media platform, (including blogging about any work related topics) staff are advised that they should not use University logos without permission, must not imply that they are speaking on behalf of the University, nor share any inappropriate content. University images or visuals owned by the University should not be used without permission.

## Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation online, including emails, messaging platforms, social networking sites or via mobile phones.

Cyber bulling is no different to any form of bullying; the behaviour and impact can be the same. Similarly, the intention of the bullying is not relevant, but the impact on the recipient.

It is important to be aware that some cyber bullying can amount to a criminal offence under a range of different legislation, including (but not limited to); Computer Misuse Act 1990, Malicious Communications Act 1988, Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and Communications Act 2003.

As with all other forms of bullying, cyber bulling is dealt with via the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure. The Equality Team can be contacted for further advice and sources of support.

Bullying may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. It is irrelevant for these purposes whether or not the cyber bulling takes place during working hours or via the use of University IT systems.

ACAS have produced a short video on cyber bulling which you can watch [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Jx0gEC1hxY).

## Staying Safe on Social Media

This guidance is provided for staff in order to support them in staying safe whilst using social media platforms.

* Consider your privacy settings for each social networking platform that you use. You may wish to restrict access to people you know and trust.
* Take care when discussing your whereabouts.
* Use robust (and different) passwords for each social networking platform that you use.
* Consider carefully the personal information included in social media profiles. For example, if you include your birthday it may be easy to work out your date of birth – a key piece of information used to identify you.
* Always remember that people on social media may not be who they say they are. Exercise caution, especially in terms of sharing personal information.