

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Warwick Students' Union recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities for interactive discussions and sharing information using a wide variety of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, blogs and wikis. However, use of social media can pose risks to reputation, to confidential and proprietary information, and can also jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.
- 1.2 The Union is committed to enabling and supporting communication to, from and between members, officers and employees. This policy aims to encourage good practice, protect and support its members, officers and employees, protect the reputation of the SU and the University, and to promote effective and innovative use of social media.
- 1.3 To minimise such risks and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate purposes, we expect all users to adhere to this policy.
- 1.4 The policy sets out the standards we expect users to follow and the action we will take in respect of any policy breaches
- 1.5 This policy applies to all users as set out in the definitions in section 2. Employees of WSU have particular responsibilities that are described in section 10 – 12. Where specific aspects of the policy apply to a specific group of users (such as employees or members for example), this will be clearly identified.
- 1.6 **Employees only:** This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. Employees are expected to comply with the current version of the policy which is available on the WSU website.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

<b>Social Media</b>	This is the term commonly used to describe web based tools which allow users to interact with each other. Social media includes (but is not limited to) accounts on Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and blogs.
<b>WSU</b>	Warwick Students' Union

<b>WSU Activity</b>	Any activity conducted either in the course of employment ( <b>employees only</b> ) or as part of, or related to, WSU activity that is not purely personal ( <b>all users</b> ).
<b>Users</b>	All people authorised to use social media for any purpose, including but not limited to employees, volunteers including clubs and societies' officers, contractors, students on work experience, WSU members, committee members, Trustees and SSLC representatives.
<b>Union Social Media Accounts</b>	These are authorised accounts that are established by committees, groups, services and departments, clubs and societies of the Union that are identifiable as being linked formally to Warwick Students' Union ,including individual accounts of Union Officers whether set up by individuals or by the Students' Union itself.
<b>Posts</b>	This is content uploaded to a social media site and may be visual or text-based.

### 3. POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs. It is intended to help users make appropriate decisions about the use of social media
- 3.2 The policy applies (but is not limited to) employees, volunteers including clubs and societies' officers, contractors, students on work experience, WSU members, committee members, Trustees and SSLC representatives.
- 3.3 **Employees only:** it applies to the use of social media whether during office hours or otherwise. For further clarification on personal use of social media by employees, refer to section 10.
- 3.4 The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to users.
- 3.5 **Employees only:** Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.
- 3.6 **For Members:** This policy is intended to relate primarily to the use of social media relating to WSU, its clubs, societies, committees or groups. Where it refers to personal social media usage, this will be identified.

- 3.7 **For Members;** Breach of this policy by members may result in disciplinary action as set out in By-Law 12.
- 3.8 **For All Users:** Users may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action (refer to the relevant disciplinary policy for either Employee or Members).

## **4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- 4.1 WSU will comply with all relevant legislation including the Data Protection Act 1998, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, the Computer Misuse Act 1990, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. In the case of apparent contradiction between WSU's policies and regulations and legislation, the latter takes precedence.
- 4.2 Further information on the key legislation is included in the User Guide.
- 4.3 A number of WSU policies are very relevant when using social media. These include the Equality and Diversity policy, the Computer Use policy, the Data Protection policy and the WSU Members' Code of Conduct. All of these policies can be found on the WSU website.
- 4.4 **For Employees:** this policy should be read in conjunction with the Staff Student protocol which can be found on the staff Intranet or can be obtained from the HR department.
- 4.5 Users should be aware that misuses of social media in certain circumstances, can constitute a criminal offence or give legal liability personally and to WSU.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **THE TRUSTEES**

The trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that WSU has adequate policies in place, that these are reviewed regularly and that the policies comply with the law.
- Ensuring that any breaches of the law which put WSU at risk are reported, investigated and mitigating actions are taken in accordance with relevant procedures.

### **MARKETING DIRECTOR:**

The Marketing Director is responsible for:

- Management of the establishment and monitoring of all organisational WSU social media including those accounts for outlets, services and Sabbatical Officers officer accounts.

- The operation of WSU generic social media accounts such as the Warwick SU Facebook page.
- Approval of any commercial or sponsorship arrangements linked to WSU social media accounts.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR:**

The Human Resources Director is responsible for:

- Communicating this policy to all new members of staff and for communicating changes to this policy to all members of staff.
- Providing training for employees regarding this policy and any investigations flowing from breaches of policy.
- Through liaison with the Student Development Manager, ensuring that this policy is integrated into Students' Union Student Training Programme and all Officer Training.

### **LINE MANAGERS:**

Line Managers are responsible for:

- Communicating this policy to all members of staff and ensuring queries are directed to the appropriate person.
- Dealing consistently with breaches of policy as and when they arise in accordance with the relevant procedures.

### **EMPLOYEES:**

Employees, including but not limited to agency or contract workers and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following this policy and associated policies e.g. Computer Use.
- Reporting any breaches of this policy that they become aware of.

### **STUDENT ACTIVITIES MANAGER**

The Student Activities Manager is responsible for:

- Communicating this policy to all club and society executive committee members
- Ensuring that all club and society executive committees have annually signed the Club and Society Data statement

### **CLUB AND SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Individual Club and Society Executive Committee members are responsible for:

- Communicating this policy to their club and society members
- Ensuring their club or society adheres to the policy

Reporting any breaches of the policy to the Student Activities Manager

### **THE PRESIDENT:**

The President is responsible for:

- Ensuring all WSU members are aware of and understand this policy.

### **THE WELFARE AND CAMPAIGNS OFFICER:**

The Welfare and Campaigns Officer is responsible for:

- Adjudication on whether social media content breaches SU policy on Equality and Diversity.

### **WSU MEMBERS:**

WSU members are responsible for:

- Taking the time to read, understand and follow this policy and associated computer use policies.
- Reporting any breaches that they become aware of.

## **6. COMPLIANCE WITH RELATED POLICIES AND AGREEMENTS**

6.1 Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies. If a comment would breach any of WSU policies in another forum for communication, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, users are prohibited from using social media to:

- 6.1.1 Breach our Computer Use Policy;
- 6.1.2 Breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
- 6.1.3 Breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality; if a user is unsure as to whether the information they wish to share is designated as confidential, they should seek WSU's advice.
- 6.1.4 Breach our Disciplinary Rules;
- 6.1.5 Breach copyright or use licensed material without permission
- 6.1.6 **For employees:** Defame or disparage the organisation, its officers, staff, or its affiliates, customers, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders;
- 6.1.7 **For members:** illegally defame, abuse or harass other users or third parties using WSU social media channels.
- 6.1.8 Harass or bully other staff or members in any way **OR** breach our Equality & Diversity policy;

- 6.1.9 Unlawfully discriminate against other users or third parties;
- 6.1.10 Breach our Data Protection Policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague or student online);
- 6.1.11 Breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).
- 6.1.12 **For employees:** Employees should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the organisation and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the organisation.
- 6.2 Employees who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- 6.3 Members who breach any of the above policies may be subject to disciplinary action as set out in By-Law 12.
- 6.4 The SU reserves the right to monitor references to the SU on social media for the purposes of reputation management and in response to complaints and enquiries. The SU may also monitor forums, pages, society/sports club accounts and blogs.
- 6.5 The SU may refer to social networking sites when investigating breaches of discipline, e.g. harassment, anti-social behaviour.
- 6.6 The SU reserves the right to require the removal of any post that is in breach of policy or procedure (including potentially offensive material).
- 6.7 **Members Only:** Anything that is deemed in the reasonable opinion of the Welfare and Campaigns Officer to be abusive or derogatory will be flagged for removal particularly where posting material relating to WSU, its clubs, societies, committees or groups and serious or repeat offences will result in Disciplinary action.

## 7. RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 7.1 In addition to the obligations set out in section 6, users are required to use social media responsibly.
- 7.2 Individuals should not reveal confidential information – this includes personal information about other users and information or intellectual property owned by the organisation.
- 7.3 Contact details or pictures of other users should not be used without their prior permission.
- 7.4 Advice must be taken from the Marketing Director or Student Activities Manager before posting social media content as part of a sponsorship agreement or posting information on products or services.

- 7.5 The SU reserves the right to veto commercial content if it is promoting rival or controversial products and/or services or is in breach of Students' Union democratically passed policy.
- 7.6 Users must adhere to the Student-Staff Protocol at all times when using social media.
- 7.7 If approached by the media for comment **employees** should refer the enquiry to the President.
- 7.8 Where contacted by the media, members should avoid appearing as though they are speaking on behalf of a society, sports club or WSU and may be best advised to seek guidance from the President
- 7.9 **For employees:** If employees are in doubt as to whether their use of social media is in breach of this policy, they should speak to their line manager or the HR Director
- 7.10 **For Members:** If members are in doubt as to whether their use of social media is in breach of this policy they should speak to the President or the Welfare and Campaigns officer or for Club and Society members; a member of the Student Activities team.
- 7.11 WSU reserves the right to restrict or prevent access to certain social media sites in cases where serious breaches of this policy have taken place.

## 8. MONITORING

- 8.1 The contents of WSU's IT resources and communications systems are our property. Therefore, users should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.
- 8.2 The SU reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff and member activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities. This is to ensure that our rules are being complied with. Users are deemed to have consented to such monitoring by acknowledgement of this policy and subsequent use of such resources and systems.
- 8.3 This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.
- 8.4 WSU may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

- 8.5 Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the organisation.
- 8.6 For further information, please refer to our Computer Use Policy.

## **9. PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

- 9.1 Individual users may have their own social media accounts for use in a personal context. If individuals post material relating to WSU, its clubs, societies, committees or groups, they should make it clear that the views expressed are their own and not those of WSU.

## **10. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY EMPLOYEES**

- 10.1 WSU recognises that employees may work long hours and may occasionally use social media for personal activities at the office or by means of WSU's computers, networks as well as other IT resources and communications systems. WSU authorises such occasional use so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with employment responsibilities or productivity.
- 10.2 While using social media at work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted.
- 10.3 Whilst using social media at work, circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the organisation's business are also prohibited.
- 10.4 Incidental or reasonable personal use of all Computing Facilities owned or operated by the WSU is permitted provided the use is minimal, does not interfere with WSU commitments, does not put WSU in disrepute and does not contravene our Internet Service Provider's policy on acceptable use.
- 10.5 In certain circumstances, employees will be subject to disciplinary action for breach of policy where personal social media accounts are used. Specifically but not exhaustively these include:
  - 10.5.1 where illegally defamatory statements are made about persons or organisations, particularly if linked to WSU
  - 10.5.2 where obscene, illegally discriminatory or defamatory material is uploaded; committing an act of gross misconduct or criminality outside of work (refer to the Disciplinary Policy)
  - 10.5.3 where confidential information about WSU, its employees, its members, suppliers, partners or the University is published or communicated

- 10.5.4 where any other statement likely to cause legal liability for the employee or for WSU is published
- 10.5.5 where social media is used to bully, harass or abuse a colleague, visitor or member in breach of the Dignity at Work policy or the Equality and Diversity Policy

## **11. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY EMPLOYEES FOR ORGANISATIONAL PURPOSES**

- 11.1 If an employee is required as part of their normal duties to speak on behalf of the organisation in a social media environment, comments must be appropriate to the ethics and policies of WSU. WSU may require employees to undergo training before commenting.
- 11.2 If employees are contacted for comments about the organisation for publication anywhere, including any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the President or Chief Executive's office.
- 11.3 Contact details of business contacts made during the course of employment are regarded as confidential to WSU. Employees may be required to delete all such details from their personal social networking accounts when their employment ends.

## **12 RECRUITMENT OF EMPLOYEES**

- 12.1 WSU may use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where such searches are undertaken, this will be in accordance with our data protection and equality and diversity obligations.

## **13 REVIEW**

- 13.1 The Chief Executive (in conjunction with the Union President) shall be responsible for reviewing this policy every two years to ensure that it meets legal requirements and best practice.