P O L I C Y

Social Media Policy

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SLT owner:	Chris Pemberton	**Together With:**	**Richard Booth**
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If approval is not required by SLT/Governors/Unions please give reason, ie name changes only.			
** If the contents of this policy have been copied from an existing policy with **no changes** please insert the date of the original Impact Assessment and Assessor in the table above.*			
Summary of Revisions:			
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Introduction

This policy sets out the principles which Shrewsbury Colleges Group staff and students are expected to follow when using the Internet and social networking sites. The Internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances, however, the principles set out below should always be followed.

The Internet provides a number of social media opportunities in which Shrewsbury Colleges Group staff and students may wish to use, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and other personal websites, blogs and accounts. The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of members of staff and students in accessing and using social networking websites.

When someone clearly identifies their association with Shrewsbury Colleges Group and/or discusses their work, they are expected to behave appropriately when on the Internet, and in ways that are consistent with the College's values and policies (e.g. Safe Guarding, eSafety, IT Acceptable Use).

The intention of this policy is not to stop Shrewsbury Colleges Group staff and students from conducting legitimate activities on the Internet and social networking sites, but serves to flag-up those areas where conflicts can arise. The policy relates to all staff and students and will be applied in accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity policies and procedures.

It is acknowledged that this policy will continue to evolve as new technologies and tools become available.

	POLICY
SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP	**Social Media Policy**

Principles

This policy on social networking is in addition to the College's existing IT Acceptable Use policy.

This policy will apply to all staff and students of the College and will be used objectively and free from discrimination in accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity policies and procedures and any other application policies and procedures.

Staff and students who identify themselves as part of Shrewsbury Colleges Group:

- Must not create or use a social media site linked to the college except for the official Shrewsbury Colleges Group social media sites created and maintained by the Marketing department
- Must use Moodle as the primary platform for communication links within specific courses and awards and not to engage in the use of external social media platforms unless authorised by relevant college management teams.

- Must not engage in activities on the Internet which might bring Shrewsbury Colleges Group into disrepute.

- Must not use the Internet in any way to attack or abuse students, colleagues, teachers or tutors.

- Must not post derogatory or offensive comments on the Internet.

- Are aware that they can be putting themselves in a vulnerable position when communicating with young people or vulnerable adults via social networking.

Staff must not send or accept friends' invites or requests from current students.
The College does not take any responsibility for web sites developed by staff or students outside the normal activities associated with their work or studies.

eSafety

The potential use of Social Media at the College requires completion of training first (Staff: e-Safety training, online information, delivery, understanding of associated policies and procedures, etc., Students: CEOP training). Staff have been trained in Safeguarding, Digital Life and Prevent and have a responsibility to remind students of potential risks online; e.g., bullying and radicalisation.

Social Media sites

All Shrewsbury Colleges Group staff and students should be mindful of the information they disclose on social media sites. Through the open nature of such sites, it is also possible for third parties to collate vast amounts of information. Where staff and students associate themselves with the College (through providing work details or joining a Shrewsbury Colleges Group network) they should act in a manner which does not bring Shrewsbury Colleges Group into disrepute.

When a staff member is contacted by the press about posts on their social networking site that relates them to Shrewsbury Colleges Group, the Marketing Communications Officer must be consulted.

If a student is contacted by the press about posts on their social networking site that relates them to Shrewsbury Colleges Group, they should inform their Course Tutor or Progression Specialist, who will then contact the College Marketing Communications Officer.

Facebook

If staff and learners are to use Facebook as an Educational tool via our institution's computer networks, it is necessary to follow the relevant procedures in place. This document and related policies and procedures cover all aspects of Social Media usage, (including Facebook), what should be adhered to, and potential unacceptable use by both staff and learners.

- Staff are required to create new Facebook accounts linked to their College email address and not their personal Facebook account if they already have one.

- Staff need to change privacy settings so that their College profile is only viewable by friends (this is only a setting to make this profile account hidden from searches, to prevent people from confusing the College account with their personal account).

- Staff should not accept/send friend's requests for this account (it is not needed for group use, and could become a safe guarding issue)

- Use of a Facebook Group requires completion of training first:
    - Staff: Facebook or e-Safety training, online information, delivery, understanding of associated policies and procedures, etc.
    - Students: CEOP training.
    - Staff have a responsibility to remind students of eSafety.

- Staff should follow the guidance and procedure document when using Facebook and Facebook Groups.

- Students must only request to join groups from information/links supplied by relevant tutor(s). This will ensure that a group is an official Shrewsbury Colleges Group group.

- Students need to be aware of how to protect their privacy on Facebook and how to change privacy settings so that their profile content is only viewable by friends.

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Consideration towards other staff and students

Social media sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. However, it may not be appropriate to share work-related information in this way.

Staff and students should be considerate to their colleagues and should not post information when they have been asked not to. They should also remove information about a colleague/peer if that colleague/peer asks them to do so.

Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about Shrewsbury Colleges Group colleagues on the Internet. This may amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offence.

Blogging

When staff or students use their personal blogs to discuss their work or Shrewsbury Colleges Group work, they must ensure that confidential information is not revealed. This might include aspects of Shrewsbury Colleges Group policy or details of internal Shrewsbury Colleges Group discussions. If in doubt about what might be confidential, staff members should consult their line manager.

If a blog makes it clear that the author works for the Shrewsbury Colleges Group, it should include a simple and visible disclaimer such as "these are my personal views and not those of Shrewsbury Colleges Group".

Staff members who already have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at Shrewsbury Colleges Group, should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager who should then inform the relevant management team for further discussion and agreement. Students must discuss any conflicts with their tutor. Staff members are free to talk about Shrewsbury Colleges Group programmes and content on their blogs, unless there are specific concerns about the nature of their role. If in doubt, staff members should consult their line manager.

Personal Blogs and websites

Blogs or websites which are purely about personal matters and do not identify the blogger or web editor as a Shrewsbury Colleges Group employee or student, or do not discuss the College will normally fall outside this guidance.

However, personal blogs and websites should not be used to attack or abuse colleagues. Staff and students should respect the privacy and the feelings of others. If a staff member or student thinks something on their blog or website gives rise to concerns about a conflict of interest, and in particular concerns about impartiality or confidentiality, this must be discussed with their line manager or tutor.

When a staff member or student is contacted by the press about posts on their blog that relate to the College, then the College's Marketing Communications Officer must be consulted.

Copyright
There is a need for a clear policy on copyright ownership with any use of Social Media. Both staff and students need to understand the risks of copyright infringement when using any kind of Social Media. This needs be covered in any training for both staff and students. Further references for staff regarding intellectual property rights and copyrights are covered in the Contract of Employment policy.

Disciplinary action
If a member of staff or student is found to be engaging in any form of online activity that is deemed as cyber bullying, bringing the college's reputation into disrepute and/or uses the Internet in any way to attack or abuse students, colleagues, teachers or tutors, they could face disciplinary action.

Please reference both the college's Staff and Students Disciplinary Policies and Procedures documents.

For students the programme leader of course(s) and tutors will be contacted to discuss the matter with the student(s) directly. Parents/guardians should also be informed of the misconduct. Disciplinary action could lead to exclusion depending on the nature of the misconduct.

Equality and Diversity
This Policy has been subject to an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment. All individuals will be treated equally and fairly in the application of this Policy.

Accessibility is also a major factor. The use of Social Media must take into account accessibility and prevent disadvantage. If Facebook is used to provide information, then wherever possible there should be accessible alternatives or workarounds offered to those who require them. In this instance, the use of Facebook in an educational setting, this information should be referenced and included on specific Moodle subject courses.