



South  
Lanarkshire  
College  

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East Kilbride

# SLC Social Media Policy

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## Document Information

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## Version History

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## Quick Links

We are inclusive and diverse, and this is one of our values.

We are committed to the FREDIE principles of Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement.



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# 1. Introduction

This Policy is in place to minimise the risks to South Lanarkshire College (SLC) through the use of social media. SLC is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way we do business. This includes using all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the different communities we serve.

Social media is the term commonly given to web-based tools and applications which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or internets to encourage participation and engagement. This Policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, LinkedIn, X (formerly known as Twitter), Wikipedia, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to the use of social media for College business purposes as well as personal use that may affect the College in any way.

To avoid major mistakes which could result in reputational, legal, and ethical issues, and misuse/abuse of a well-functioning social media relationship, it is important that we manage any potential risks through a common-sense approach and framework as well as proactively monitoring the development of such applications.

This Policy aims to provide managers and individual employees with information concerning the use of/or the development of, any social media application, and to help them get the best out of the tools available whilst maintaining a safe professional environment and protecting themselves, as well as the College.

This Policy covers all staff and contractors associated with SLC.

This Policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the College may amend it at any time subject to consultation with recognised trade union.

This Policy extends to cover all devices such as desktops, laptops, tablets, mobile phones and even employee's own computer equipment or other device when used for business related work.

## 2. Staff responsible for implementing the Policy

The SLC Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this Policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for its operation to the Marketing & Communications Manager.

Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this Policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks lies with the Marketing & Communications Manager, who will review this Policy every two years to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice. This is in association with any updated data protection legislation that maybe advised by the SLC DPO.

Managers have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this Policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and acting when behaviour falls below its requirements. Managers will be given training to do this as part of the College Continuing Professional Development Program.

All staff are responsible for the success of this Policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Questions regarding the content or application of this Policy should be directed to the Marketing & Communications Manager.

### 3. Compliance with related policies and agreements

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the College's other policies or procedures. If an internet or blog post would breach any of the College's policies or procedures in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach the College's ICT Acceptable Use Policy;
- breach the College's Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- breach the College's obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
- breach any obligations contained in College policies or contractual requirements relating to confidentiality;
- breach the College's Staff Disciplinary Procedure;
- breach the College's Safeguarding Policy;
- harass or bully other staff in any way or breach the College's Bullying and Harassment Procedure for Staff;
- unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties or breach the College's Equal Opportunities Procedure;
- breach the College's Data Protection Procedure (for example, staff must never disclose personal information about a colleague, student, customer, or contractor online and must also seek consent for the pictures or photos used in a social media post by means of the photo consent form or checking the student's enrolment details);
- criticise or argue with students, customers, colleagues, contractors or competitors;
- post images or links to images or other content which are inappropriate;
- breach any other laws or regulatory requirements.

References, positive and negative, can be attributed to the College and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the College. Staff should therefore never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites.

Staff who breach any of the above policies may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### 4. Personal use of social media

Occasional and reasonable personal use of social media during working hours, as may be determined by the College in its reasonable discretion, is permitted so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content, does not interfere with a member of staff's employment responsibilities or productivity, and complies with this Policy. Access to particular social media websites using College systems may be blocked by the College at any time.

## 5. Prohibited use

Staff must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the College's interests or reputation, even indirectly.

Staff must not use social media to defame or disparage the College, its staff or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties on any grounds including those of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.

Staff must not express opinions on the College's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by their senior manager. Staff may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.

Staff must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as the College's performance, or do anything to jeopardise the College's trade secrets, confidential information and intellectual property.

Staff must not discuss the College's internal workings or structure or its future business plans or projects where these are not already in the public domain other than through their or another member of staff's authorised disclosure.

While staff are permitted to say that they work for the College on social media, their online profile (for example the name of a blog or a X account) must not contain the College's name.

If staff do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which the College operates), they must make it clear that the views expressed are their own.

Any communications that staff make in a professional capacity through social media must not breach copyright, for example by:

- using someone else's images or written content without permission
- failing to acknowledge permission which has been given to them or the College to reproduce something

Any misuse of social media should be reported to the individual's line Manager who will consult with the Marketing & Communications Manager.

## 6. Use of social media for College business

The College encourages staff to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites as part of their work. For example, it is an important part of how the College communicates with its customers and promotes its services. Some social media sites can also be used effectively to support learning and teaching.

Staff may contribute to the College's social media activities, for example by writing for its blogs, managing a Facebook account for a class, or contributing to an official X account, or YouTube channel for the College.

When using social media in a professional capacity staff should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the College in the public sphere.

These safeguards may include:

- ensuring that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the College
- obtaining permission from an appropriate manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media

Where possible, it is preferred that the main SLC social accounts are tagged for resharing purposes. However, if staff would like to create for example, a curriculum focused Facebook, X account or other social media account for College business they must discuss this first with the Marketing Team. Only SLC business accounts should be used for this purpose. It is essential that Marketing know what is in the public domain under the SLC name for reputational and brand reasons.

If staff duties require them to speak on behalf of the College in a social media environment, the College may require them to undergo training before they do so and impose certain requirements and restrictions regarding their activities. Likewise, if staff are contacted for comments about the College for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, they must direct the enquiry to the Marketing Team and must not respond without written approval.

The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the provisions of this Policy.

## **7. Business continuity and incident response**

Only members of the incident response team assigned by the senior management leaders are permitted to post information for incident/crisis management. For example, decisions to close the building, incidents involving the safety of the staff and students and potentially the wider community.

As part of the business continuity plan, there must be a designated spokesperson and clear messaging should be agreed before an incident. Updates for an incident/emergency plan must be consistent and clear.

## **8. Guidelines for responsible use of social media**

Staff should make it clear in any social media postings, or in their personal profile, that they are speaking on their own behalf. They must write in the first person and use a personal e-mail address.

Staff must be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that they are personally responsible and legally liable for all communications which they cause to be published on the internet for anyone to see.

If staff disclose their affiliation with the College on their profile or in any social media postings, they must state that their views do not represent those of the College (unless they are authorised to speak on the College's behalf as set out in section 5).

Staff should also ensure that their profile and any content they post are consistent with the professional image they are expected to present to students, customers, and colleagues.

Staff should ensure that the posts and information shared is accurate to the best of their knowledge in relation to College activities.

If staff are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any proposed statement or posting, or if they see anything that disparages or reflects poorly on the College, they should discuss this with their line manager.

## 9. Monitoring

The contents of the College's IT resources and communications systems are its property. Therefore, staff 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 the College's electronic information and communications systems.

For further information, please refer to the College's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

## 10. Breach of this Policy

Employees should be aware that use of social media in a way that may be deemed as deliberate or inadvertent misuse could be a breach of this Policy and may lead to disciplinary action under the College Disciplinary Procedure. Serious breaches may constitute gross misconduct under the Disciplinary Procedure, which will normally be regarded as grounds for summary dismissal.

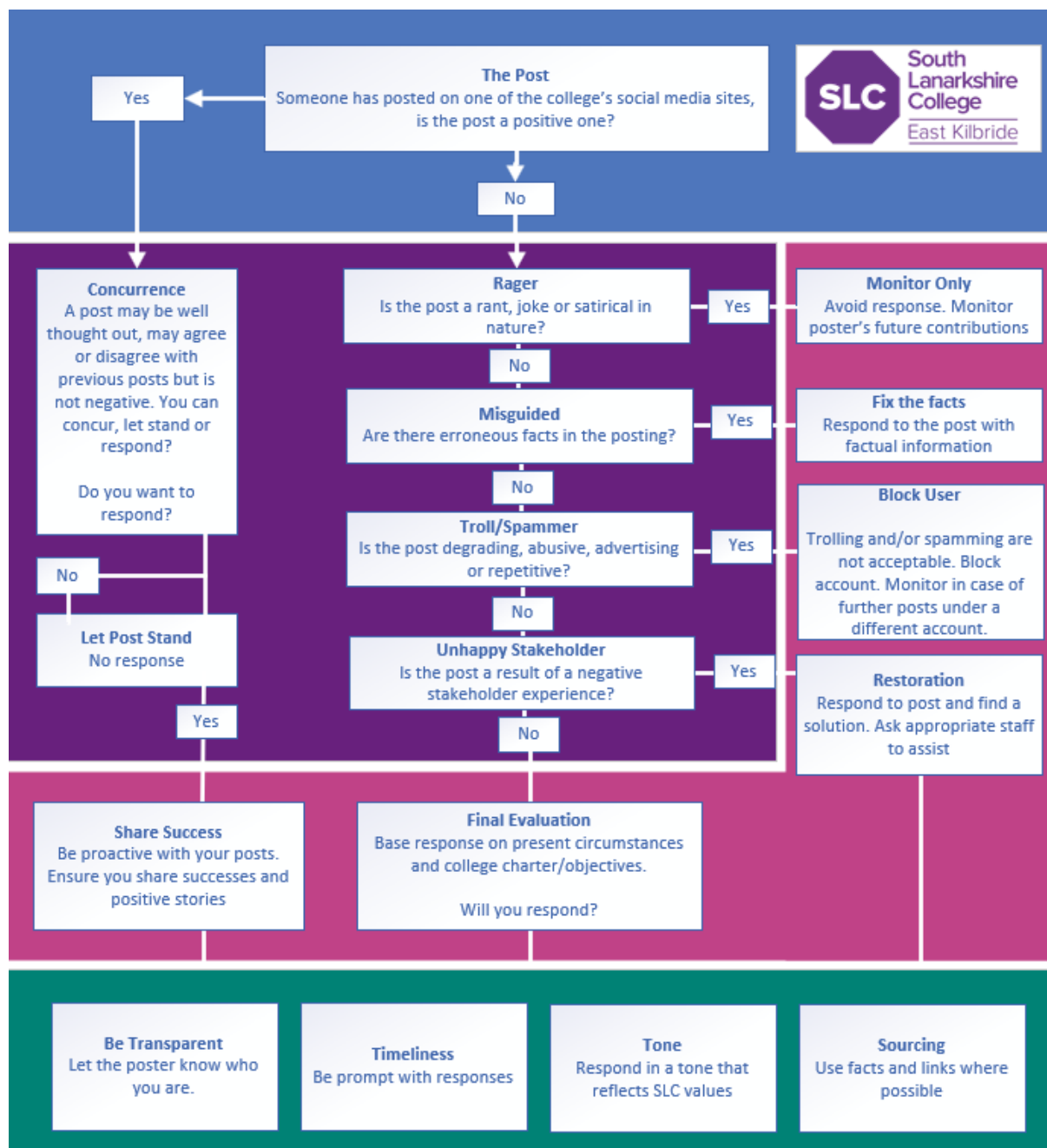
Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this Policy will be required to co-operate with the College's investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

SLC reserve the right to remove, block, report or ban any user who:

- encourages others and/or posts unacceptable content
- uses offensive images
- has an offensive username



## 11. Social media post assessment



## 12. Digital etiquette guidelines

### 1. Professionalism

- **Tone and Language:** Use clear, professional, and respectful language. Avoid slang, jargon, and overly casual expressions.
- **Accuracy:** Ensure that all information shared is accurate and up-to-date. Verify facts before posting.
- **Grammar and Spelling:** Proofread all posts for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes.

### 2. Respect and Inclusivity

- **Respectful Interaction:** Engage respectfully with followers, colleagues, and other users. Avoid arguments and confrontations.
- **Inclusivity:** Use inclusive language and be mindful of diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- **Privacy:** Respect the privacy of others. Do not share personal or confidential information without consent.

### 3. Consistency and Branding

- **Brand Voice:** Maintain a consistent voice that aligns with the organisation's brand identity.
- **Visuals:** Use approved logos, images, and branding elements. Ensure visual content is high quality and appropriately credited.
- **Content Guidelines:** Follow established content guidelines, including post frequency, topics, and themes.



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