

Social Media Policy

Owner	Group Marketing and Communications Director		
Version	2.0		
Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with OfS Regulatory advice 24 Guidance related to freedom of speech. • Clarified roles and responsibilities for signing off on posts. • Added restrictions against publishing identifiable images. • Added sections on: Influencer and ambassador disclosure, Accessibility standards and AI Use 		
Approval date	August 2025	Approved by	Board of Directors
Implementation date	September 2025	Date of next review	September 2026
Related internal policy	Student Safeguarding, Prevent And Harassment Policy Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech		
Related external policies and regulations	OfS Regulatory advice 24 Guidance related to freedom of speech Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Advertising Standards Authority / CAP Code – influencer and ad disclosure Competition and Markets Authority – endorsements and online reviews guidance Information Commissioner's Office – UK GDPR & direct marketing (including social media) Online Safety Act 2023 – Ofcom guidance and platform reporting tools		

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Purpose

To provide a policy for the use of social media for both staff and students of Regent College London (the College), together with guidelines on the use of social media. Social media is used as a generic term to cover both social and business networking and media using the internet.

The Social Media Policy sets out the College's expectations and general principles for the usage of social networking services including those which are accessed via the internet. Social Media refers to a broad range of websites and online services that allow people to connect with friends, family and colleagues as well as meet people with similar interests and hobbies.

Regent College London's Social Media Policy:

- a) Provides guidance concerning the use of social media through the College's computer network, systems or equipment and/or the use of social media to represent or discuss matters related to Regent College London and/or members of the College's community including all staff, students and alumni.
- b) Sets forth guidelines for the administration of Regent College London social media website sites.
- c) Acknowledges that unauthorised use of the wi-fi facility within the College is difficult to track, and that the use of personal devices accessing wi-fi can only be broadly monitored; awareness of this level of threat to inappropriate, or extremist activity is highlighted within this policy.

Scope

The Social Media Policy applies to all staff of Regent College London, in any role, on a permanent, temporary, casual or fixed term basis and all students. The policy also applies to anyone under contract for service and self-employment. The Policy also applies to any other people who are linked to the College such as volunteers, seconded staff, students on work placements within the College and workers engaged through Service for Contract, Self-employed or recruitment agency. For purposes of brevity the word 'staff' is used in this document to cover these different arrangements that the College has with those who work or contribute to its educational business.

Background

Social and professional networking platforms are part of everyday life. Regent College London recognises the value of these channels for networking, marketing and the exchange of ideas. With widespread use comes the risk of misuse that could bring the College into disrepute, compromise staff or students, or breach legal duties. This policy sets out the College's position on the use of social media by students, staff, contractors and partners.

Use of social media can, in some instances, breach legal and social expectations, for example by accessing, creating or sharing unlawful, discriminatory, extremist or otherwise offensive content. This policy embeds the College's Prevent duty and

safeguarding responsibilities, including action to combat the creation or dissemination of extremist or terrorist views and objectives.

This policy applies to any use of social media to represent or discuss Regent College London, its programmes, services, people or community, whether on College networks or personal devices, and whether on official College channels or personal accounts when the College is referenced in a professional context.

“Social media” refers to tools and platforms that enable people to create, share and comment on content. Examples include, but are not limited to, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Flickr, blogs, forums, texting and messaging services. The list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

Activity on social media concerning the College is governed by the same laws, policies, rules of conduct and etiquette that apply elsewhere at the College. Private activity away from the College may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contract, or deregistration for students, where it breaches the law or College policy, brings the College into disrepute or interferes with College business. This includes research activity where it impacts the wellbeing of staff or students.

Freedom of Speech

Regent College London believes that ‘the end result of education is character’. To that end, we wish to establish and maintain an inclusive community that recognises that people with different backgrounds, experience, skills, attitudes, beliefs and views bring fresh ideas and new perspectives.

The law protects the rights of members of the College to engage in debate and argument about social, political, religious, economic and scientific ideas, provided that the views expressed are not contrary to law. Freedom of speech within the law may include speech that is shocking, disturbing or offensive.

Regent College London’s full Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech is available on its website: <https://www.rcl.ac.uk/about/policies/>

Social Media Policy

Access to social media sites using Regent College London computers and network systems is allowed, but the College reserves the right to block such access if a noted interference with day to-day duties is evident. However, staff, students and those under Contract for Service or self- employment must ensure that access adheres to this policy and does not interfere with work or academic duties.

Official RCL social channels are administered by Marketing and Communications team. The Social Media Lead (or delegate) approves day-to-day content and moderates comments. Statements relating to legal matters, live incidents, policy positions or crises require CEO (or delegate) approval. No one may make statements

on behalf of the College unless authorised the CEO. High-risk statements require CEO (or delegate) approval. Staff, students and others related to Regent College London must not publish personal, identifiable information concerning or about College employees, students or alumni. Staff, students and other related to the College must not express opinions that profess to represent the views of the College unless authorised to do so.

Staff, students and others related to Regent College London must never post a comment about the College that purports to represent the views of the College, unless approved by the CEO.

Staff, students and others related to the College are prohibited from creating corporate accounts under names such as Regent College London and other names associated with the College that could detract from or attempt to impersonate any of the College's main accounts.

Harassment or bullying via social media will not be tolerated. Evidence of harassment using social media will be investigated and may result in disciplinary procedures.

Staff, students and others related to Regent College London must also adhere to the principles contained within this Policy outside of working hours and may be subject to disciplinary action if there is failure to do so.

The inappropriate use of the social media web sites may lead to disciplinary action resulting in termination of contract for staff and deregistration from the programme for students; this is particularly the case where there are sensitive issues being debated, or links being created to sites that feature extremist or terrorist activity, or in any way contravene the College's obligations under Prevent Duty.

Responsibilities

Users of social media are responsible for ensuring that their use of social media is appropriate and fully compliant with this policy.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff, students and others related to Regent College London for whom they are responsible are aware of this policy.

The Social Media Lead (within Group Marketing and Communications) is responsible for day-to-day publishing, moderation and monitoring of College social media sites, with named deputies for out-of-hours cover. IT is responsible for account security standards (MFA, password manager, device controls).

Marketing and Communications maintains the register of official accounts, page roles and administrators, and conducts quarterly access reviews.

Guidelines on the use of social media

When posting to any of Regent College London's social media sites, communicating with staff and students of the College community, or discussing the College on any site, even through your own personal account or using your own phone, computer or

other device without using the College network or equipment, the following Dos and Do Nots should be followed.

Do

Remember that UK laws and Regent College London policies, in particular Student Safeguarding, Prevent And Harassment Policy, and those governing defamation, infringement of copyright and trademark rights, and unauthorised disclosure of student records and other confidential and private information apply to communications by the College's students and staff through social media.

Make sure that you accurately disclose your relationship to the College when endorsing Regent College London. When using the College sites or acting within the scope of your College responsibilities, you may only endorse Regent College London, its programmes, or its services if you have been authorised to do so by the appropriate member of senior staff at the College.

Carefully consider the accuracy, clarity, length (brief is better) and tone of your comments before posting them. Postings on social media sites should protect the College's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Remember, your postings may be on the social media site for a long time!

Sign your posting with your real name and indicate your relationship to Regent College London. Do not use aliases or post anonymously.

Respect the views of others, even if you disagree.

Be truthful, accurate and complete in describing Regent College London's programmes and services.

Strive to be accountable to Regent College London audiences via regular updates and prompt responses when appropriate.

Obey the Terms of Service of any social media site or platform in which you participate.

Where appropriate, link back to information posted on Regent College London's website instead of duplicating content. When linking to a news article, for example, about the College, check first to determine whether you can link to a release from the College's website rather than another media outlet.

Whenever, as a member of staff of Regent College London, you utilise social media as a means of student participation in course work, be sure to also provide a practical and appropriate alternative for students who may be unable or reluctant to utilise that particular social media (for example, some students may not be comfortable with opening a Facebook account).

Regent College London encourages students and staff to set appropriate privacy settings on their personal social media accounts to protect personal information and ensure their profiles are not publicly accessible by unauthorised individuals.

Regent College London encourages students to follow best practices for choosing your social media passwords. Users should use complex passwords and refrain from using same passwords for all social media accounts.

Do Not

Use social media; to harass, threaten, insult, defame or bully another person or entity; to violate any Regent College London policy; or to engage in any unlawful act, including but not limited to gambling, identity theft or other types of fraud.

Do not promote extremist or terrorist views.

Post or store content that is obscene, pornographic, defamatory, racist, excessively violent, harassing, threatening, bullying or otherwise objectionable or injurious. In addition, do not attempt to compromise the security of any the College's social media site or use such site to operate an illegal lottery, gambling operation, or other illegal venture.

Post copyrighted content (such as text, video, graphics or sound files) without permission from the holder of the copyright. Remember, even information that is widely available to the public (such as text, photographs, or other material posted on the Internet) may be subject to copyright restrictions that prohibit unauthorised duplication or dissemination.

Use the Regent College London's name, logo or trademarks for promotional announcements, advertising, product-related press releases or other commercial use, or to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.

Disclose confidential College information, non-public strategies, student records, or personal information concerning (past or present) staff, students or alumni of the College without proper authorisation.

Make false claims or representations about Regent College London's programmes or services.

Do not speculate or guess if you do not know the information.

Spread gossip, rumours, or other unverified information. Do not assume that everything posted on a social media site is true.

Spend excessive time using social media for personal purposes during working hours or use any College social media sites, networks, equipment or peripherals for unauthorised personal or commercial purposes.

Transmit chain letters, junk email, or bulk communications.

Do not publish identifiable images or video without recorded consent. For under-18s, obtain parental/guardian consent. Keep a central consent and asset log managed by Marketing and Communications. Use watermarking where appropriate. Represent your personal opinions as institutionally endorsed by Regent College London. If you

are not authorised to post specific content on behalf of Regent College, then the following disclaimer should appear in your posting: These are my personal opinions and do not reflect the views of the College.

Expect that your posted content will remain private or that dissemination will necessarily be limited to your intended audience, even if you are accessing your own private social media account over the Regent College London network or using the College's equipment or peripherals.

Attempt to mask your identity or attribute your comments to another person (real or fictitious).

Discuss legal issues or risks, or draw legal conclusions, on pending legal or regulatory matters involving the College.

If you become aware of objectionable content on College channels, notify the Social Media Lead immediately. Escalate safeguarding, threat or illegal content concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Social Media Lead for action.

Posting to social media sites not administered by Regent College London

Regent College London is aware that staff and students of the College may wish to express their personal ideas and opinions through private social media that are not administered by the College. In line with its Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, the College will not restrict staff or students from expressing lawful views.

Nevertheless, Regent College London reserves the right, under circumstances it deems appropriate and subject to applicable laws and regulations, to impose disciplinary measures, up to and including deregistration (student) from the College or termination of employment or contract (staff), upon students, staff and others related to the College who use private social media sites or communications resources in violation of this policy or in ways that reflect poorly on the College or are deemed to interfere with the conduct of College business. In appropriate cases, such conduct may also be reported to law enforcement authorities.

Influencer and ambassador disclosure

Influencers, ambassadors and staff making incentive-based posts must clearly label content as advertising (e.g., "Ad", "Advert" or "Ad feature"). Marketing will not approve assets without appropriate disclosure.

Privacy, data and DMs

Move any personal data received via direct message into approved College systems within one working day and respond with the appropriate privacy notice link. Delete the source message once logged. Do not collect or retain personal data from social media without a lawful basis and a defined retention period.

Accessibility standards

Provide alt text for images; captions/subtitles for video; use CamelCase for hashtags; avoid flashing content; ensure sufficient colour contrast; and offer text alternatives for graphics.

AI use

Where AI tools are used to assist with copy, images or video, outputs must be fact-checked by a human editor. Do not publish synthetic depictions of real people without explicit, recorded consent. Label AI-generated visuals where there is any risk of misleading the audience.

Site approval, administration and requirements

With appropriate authorisation, Regent College London social media sites may be administered on behalf of:

- a) Regent College London as an institution
- b) Individual Centres, programmes or departments
- c) Members of the staff, in connection with a specific programme (d) Student organisation.

Unauthorised use of the Regent College London's name, logo, or trademarks without the express permission of an authorized official of the College is strictly prohibited.

Authorisation of social media sites

Any person or organisation who seeks authorisation for a new social media site will be expected to provide a rationale and justification for the proposed new social media site and produce a plan for managing its content.

Social media sites administered by members of staff in connection with specific programmes and/or units must be authorised in advance by the CEO.

Site Administration

Each authorised Regent College London social media site must have a designated administrator approved by the CEO. Students at the College should be informed concerning the name of the site administrator and how to contact the person.

Site Registration

The Group Commercial Officer, Group Marketing and Communications Director or a person delegated by the CEO may review site content. If by doing so they become aware of content posted on a Regent College London's social media site in violation of this policy, must promptly take appropriate action. This may include notifying the site administrator, the person who authorised the creation of the site, and/or other College staff, and then removing the content and/or closing the site.

Site requirements: terms of use, privacy policies, and disclaimers

Terms of Use - All Regent College London social media sites shall clearly set forth Terms and Conditions of Use applicable to the site, which shall incorporate the appropriate sections of this Social Media Policy.

Acknowledgement and Agreement - The Terms and conditions of use must also include the following Acknowledgement and Agreement:

In connection with the use of this site and as a condition of such use, the user expressly acknowledges and agrees that any use of the site is subject to these Terms and Conditions of Use; that these Terms and Conditions of Use may change without notice and continued use of the site constitutes acceptance of such changes; that Regent College London neither endorses nor shall be held liable for the content of any postings that are not made by authorised College personnel or that are in violation of this policy; and that the user shall protect Regent College London, its associates, and their respective officers, directors, trustees, employees, agents and representatives from any and all expenses and liabilities, including but not limited to reasonable legal fees, resulting from any content posted by such user or any violation of these Terms and Conditions of Usage.

Disclaimer

Every Regent College London social media site shall include a disclaimer stated as follows:

Content posted to this site represents the views of the individuals who post it and, unless stated otherwise, neither represents the views of nor is endorsed by Regent College Higher Education.

Violators may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including deregistration of a student from the College or termination of employment or contract for a member of staff. Any questions regarding site administration or usage may be addressed to the Admissions Officer. Questions regarding copyright, privacy, advertising, and other legal requirements may be addressed to the CEO.

Regent College London will support and cooperate with appropriate agencies where investigations are taking place relating to content on social media sites.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually each September, with interim updates issued if there are material legal, regulatory or platform changes.