

# Social Media Policy (Employees)

## Effective from March 2014

**Court Theatre Training Company**

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#### Preamble

All College formal documents relate to the policies, strategies, procedures and regulations of the College having been approved by the appropriate formally recognised and constituted body. All College employees and students are required to adhere to the formal processes and regulations of the College.

This document should not be read in isolation as other College processes/formal documents could be relevant. A full listing of all formal documents is available on the College's website.

Any interpretation of the content of this formal document will be at the discretion of the Human Resources Services Director.

The names of committees and titles of posts may change from time to time. This shall not invalidate the powers of the equivalent successor committees or post holders.

**We will consider any requests for accessible formats eg Braille, tape, disc, email or a larger font size. Please let us know what you need by contacting the Human Resources Directorate.**

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The use of social media is an important means of communication both to enhance the profile of Court Theatre Training Company (the College) and the professional profile of individuals. This policy is intended to advise and assist employees using social media either as part of their professional role at the College or in a private capacity where boundaries between work responsibilities and home life can become blurred. It is not intended to restrict scholarly, academic or pedagogic use of the media. Neither is it intended to restrict what employees say or do in a personal capacity, nor prevent employees from expressing critical comment.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social Media also covers blogs, and video and image-sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.
- 1.3 Employees should not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites. They should ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their other duties as this is likely to have a detrimental effect on productivity.
- 1.4 The College does have responsibilities to maintain the security of its systems and information and to protect its reputation. Individual employees have a contractual obligation not to misuse the College's resources and not to take action that brings the College into disrepute. Employees also have a responsibility to ensure that they do not breach the disciplinary rules of the College, Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the organisation, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to dismissal. This policy is designed to assist employees in ensuring that they have access to social media without inadvertently breaching the expected levels of conduct or the College's computing regulations.

## 0.2.0 Guidance for employees who use social media as part of their role

1. 2.1 This section applies to employees who use social media, described in 1.2 above, as part of their role.
2. 2.2 Employees using social media as part of their role are representing the College, and should therefore make it clear that they work at the College, use their real name and be clear about their role. If an employee is identified as a member of the College they need to ensure that their content and tone is consistent with their role at work.
3. 2.3 Employees should consider carefully whether there is need to set up networks in external social media, bearing in mind the need to make sure that content is updated regularly and the need to adhere to the College's policies.
4. 2.4 Employees should not set up sites, groups or pages that purport to be official College sites, groups or pages or use the College's branding without the permission of the College, whether they are acting independently or on behalf of third parties.
5. 2.5 The College's virtual learning environment or equivalent, should be used for online course-related materials.
6. 2.6 As with all communication made on behalf of the College it is expected that employees are respectful to others. Employees should therefore avoid spam or remarks that are off-topic and must not post offensive or discriminatory comments.
7. 2.7 All statements made must be true and not misleading. If an employee speaks about other educational providers they should make sure that it is factually correct and that it does not disparage the provider. Unnecessary or unproductive arguments should be avoided. If an employee makes an error, the mistake should be acknowledged and corrected. If an employee modifies content that was previously posted, for example editing a blog, they should make clear that they have done this.
8. 2.8 In an academic context it is expected that there will be debate. An employee should feel free to comment on their area of expertise, but ensure that they are not disclosing any confidential information regarding the College and maintain standards required in Data Protection legislation when discussing other people. Even when disagreeing with others' opinions, however heated the debate, employees should be polite. What an employee says and how they engage and disengage with a debate reflects on them as a professional and on the College.
9. 2.9 In line with usual standards about disclosure of information employees must not publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the College unless they seek prior permission. Employees must not publish or report on any items of communication about the College, unless this is already in the public domain, without seeking permission.
- 10.2.10 Employees must not post any photographs of people unless they have their permission (any photographs of children and young people under the age of 16 should have parental permission).
- 11.2.11 Employees should not comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties the College may be in dispute with or anything that may be considered a crisis situation.

## 0.3.0 Using social media in a personal capacity

1. 3.1 If an employee accesses social media at work or they use their College email account (even on their home computer) they must ensure that they comply with this document.
2. 3.2 An employee's conduct outside of work will affect their employment if their conduct could be said to bring the College into disrepute or where their conduct outside of work compromises their ability to carry out their role effectively or affects work colleagues.
3. 3.3 As stated in 2.9 and 2.10 above the same guidance applies for personal use i.e. in line with usual standards about disclosure of information employees must not publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the College unless they seek prior permission. Employees must not publish or report on any items of communication about the College, unless this is already in the public domain, without seeking permission. Employees must not post any photographs of people unless they have their permission (any photographs of children and young people under the age of 16 should have parental permission).

4. 3.4 Employees should beware of breaching data protection requirements, for example, if an employee blogs about their day at work and states that “Joe Bloggs was off sick today” they may have breached the Data Protection Act requirements about the use of sensitive data.
5. 3.5 Employees are discouraged from using social media to express discontent about work or their work colleagues. This is not advised as it is not a productive route to resolve any issues they may have. If an employee has a complaint they are encouraged to discuss this with their manager. Clearly, employees are free to express views about the College and will not be liable to any breach of the disciplinary rules so long as they ensure that:
  1. a) they make it clear that they are “speaking” from a personal perspective, and
  2. b) their statements are true and can be substantiated, and
  3. c) they are not breaching confidentiality or other legal requirements.
6. 3.6 An employee should not refer to named employees, students, contractors or clients unless they have their express permission. Neither, should they create “personas” attached to employees, students, contractors or clients where this will lead to the identification of the individual referred to. To do so may lead to complaints against the employee relating to a breach of data protection and/or harassment.
7. 3.7 Nothing in the above guidance should be interpreted as a restriction on an employee’s right to pursue action under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, commonly referred to as “whistle blowing”. It should also be noted that disclosures on social networking sites are covered within the Act and therefore employees should ensure they have legal immunity prior to a post or other communication.
8. 3.8 If an employee has any concerns regarding the use of social media and how this affects their employment they should consult their manager or HR Business Partner or their trade union representative.

## 4.0 Cyberbullying

4.1 Cyberbullying is where someone, or a group of people, threaten and/or harass someone using social media, email or mobile phone. Where employees are subject to such practice they are advised to respond as follows:

1. a) if the originator of the material is an employee they should consider resolving the matter directly with the College management committee. The College reserves the right to investigate and manage any complaints under the Disciplinary Procedures where a breach of conduct is alleged.
2. b) if the originator of the material is a student they should report this to their line manager and the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Students’ Disciplinary Procedure.
3. c) if the originator of the material is a contractor, client or visitor to the College they should immediately report this to their manager.
4. d) if the originator of the material has no connection to the College they should consider reporting the matter to the police.

## 5.0

### 5.1

## General Guidance

Employees should think about their own privacy and check a site’s privacy statement to see what they are signing up to and set privacy settings appropriately. Social network pages, blogs etc are public. Employees should not put information on them that they do not want others to see. Once information has been posted it can be very difficult to remove. Even if an employee elects to unsubscribe from a site the information may continue to remain visible for a long time.

Some services will ask individuals to complete a registration form before they can be used. All companies who collect personal information have to state how personal information will be used. This information is contained in the website’s terms and conditions.

## 6.0 Monitoring

1. 6.1 The Strategic Marketing & Communications Directorate monitors social media for content relating to the College in order to protect and enhance the reputation of the College and engage with a range of stakeholders.
2. 6.2 All College web activity is logged, and access to sites which are likely to cause a breach of the Regulations for the use of Computing Facilities may be blocked. The College reserves the right to sanction investigation and inspection of electronic communications, where there is a complaint or an infringement of the regulations or the rules of the College.

## 7.0 Review

7.1 The policy will be formally reviewed in May 2015; however reviews may take place in the interim to ensure the effectiveness of the policy and compliance with legislation, with changes being made accordingly.

Prepared by:	Buckinghamshire New University Resources Directorate/ (adjusted for suitability by) Court Theatre Training Company	Date:	Nov 2011
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Review Date:	May 2015
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Updated on and implemented by CTTC	March 2014
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