



UNIVERSITY
TECHNICAL COLLEGE BOLTON

UTC BOLTON

STUDENT SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY

2017-2019

Approved: Chair Interim Management Committee

Date: June 2017

Date for Review: June 2019

Revision History:

Revision History			
Revision	Date	Owner	Summary of Changes
NEW	May 2017	LM	NEW
2	June 2017	LM	Replace reference to Governing Body with Interim Management Committee
3			
4			

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1. Introduction

UTC Bolton recognises that social media sites are a prevalent part of everyday life and provide an opportunity to communicate. For the purposes of this policy, 'social media' refers to the dissemination of information including (without limitation) text, images, videos, blogs and audio on platforms ranging from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, WhatsApp and YouTube to blogs and other emerging networks.

The UTC recognises and embraces the benefits and opportunities that social media can bring as a tool. The UTC encourages students to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media; however, wherever and however this is done, students must be aware of the potential impact on both themselves and the UTC.

It is important for students to realise that communication both in the 'real' world and through web-based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit and acceptable boundaries.

In all cases where a social media account is used which identifies the UTC, it must be made clear that the views expressed on or through that social media account do not represent the views of the UTC and must not bring the UTC, its staff or students into disrepute.

The UTC is committed to ensuring all its students are safe. As a consequence, students are not permitted to converse with staff of the UTC via social media. Should a member of staff or a student be in breach of this commitment, the UTC will commence an investigation.

It is also important to recognise that social contact via social media may provide opportunities for types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Professionals, i.e. teachers who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the educational setting, i.e. the UTC, with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

2. Aims of the Social Media Policy

The aims of this policy and agreement are to ensure all students:

- Are clear about what constitutes appropriate use of social media, within and outside of UTC Bolton;
- Understand the Social Media Policy covers all social media activities which directly or indirectly identify or discuss the UTC and/or its staff and students;
- Understand they have a responsibility to represent the UTC in a fair and accurate manner and to uphold the reputation of the UTC. Misuse of social media can cause reputational, legal and ethical issues and such misuse will have consequences for the student;
- Have confirmed that they will make appropriate use of social media;
- Are aware that innocently intended comments posted on social media may be misconstrued;
- Are aware of the possible consequences of inappropriate use, which could include temporary or permanent loss of access to IT facilities, or even result in serious disciplinary action being taken, including permanent exclusion from the UTC;
- Are aware that they are responsible for everything that takes place on their computers, tablets or mobile phones from the UTC Bolton site;
- Are aware that activity on computers and tablets, including use of social media is regularly monitored and may be logged.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All students are responsible for:

- Ensuring they do not post anything which is disrespectful to individuals, obscene, sexually explicit, inappropriate, inflammatory or defamatory towards the UTC or any person or student at the UTC;
- Ensuring online contributions are polite and non-offensive;
- Ensuring use of social media does not infringe on the rights, or privacy of UTC staff or students;
- Ensuring they do not make inappropriate comments or judgments about UTC staff, other students or third parties **whether within or outside of the College day**;
- Ensuring that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies and guidance;
- Ensuring they implement suitable security measures such as a PIN or password on portable devices;

- Ensuring contact from staff of the UTC via social media is immediately reported to the Principal;
- Ensuring they do not upload photographs of other UTC students onto social media platforms unless they have permission to do this from students' parents or carers. No student should be identifiable by name. All materials must represent the UTC Bolton in an appropriate way;
- Reporting any incidents or concerns to the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any possible child protection issues, including those in relation to PREVENT, female genital mutilation or child sexual exploitation;
- Reporting any content or views posted by a member of the UTC community that incites people to commit acts of terrorism or violent extremism;
- Ensuring they know and follow the policies and procedures of the UTC if they wish to raise any dissatisfaction or concerns they may have. Concerns must be raised through such procedures, not on social media.

4. Unacceptable Content

The following are examples of content that is considered to be of an unacceptable nature and should never be posted:

- Inappropriate or discriminatory comments regarding the UTC;
- Material that could be deemed to be threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, defamatory, libellous or hostile towards any individual, group or entity;
- Sexist, racist, or homophobic views;
- Illegal activities or organisations;
- Content that infringes or violates someone else's rights;
- Content of a violent extremist or terrorist nature or which incites people to commit acts of terrorism or violent extremism;
- Content that could create a security risk for the UTC, its staff or students;
- Any confidential information about the UTC, the University of Bolton or partners;
- Details of complaints and/or legal proceedings;
- Misleading information;
- The work of someone else without obtaining permission;

- Personal information about another individual, including contact information, without their express permission;
- Spam;
- Comments using fake accounts or using another person's name;
- Anything which may bring the UTC into disrepute.

5. Monitoring

The UTC reserves the right, within the law, to monitor, intercept and review, without notice, student activities using its IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings, to ensure that its rules are being complied with and such activities are for legitimate purposes.

6. Data Protection Act (1998) and Freedom of Information Act (2000)

The Data Protection Act (1998) ('the Act') applies to social media as it does in other contexts. Students must ensure that all posts comply with the Act and the UTC Data Protection Policy.

No personal information, including photographs and videos should be shared on social media without the consent of the individual to whom it relates. Students should, therefore, never post personal information of other students and/or a third party without their consent.

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) may apply to posts and content that students have uploaded to official UTC websites, or any other website belonging to a public authority. As such, if a request for such information is received by the UTC (or other public authority), the content that has been posted may be disclosed.

7. Reporting an Incident

Any serious or potentially illegal misuse of social media must be reported to the Principal or, in the case of misuse by the Principal, to the Chair of the Interim Management Committee.

Such misuse could include:

- Accessing pornography, cyber-bullying, accessing materials in relation to violent extremism or child sexual exploitation;
- On site use of internet and the UTC IT facilities for personal financial gain;
- Damaging the reputation of the UTC through use of social media.

Where a breach of this policy is reported, the UTC will review the circumstances and decide on the most appropriate course of action, which may include referring the matter to be dealt with under a different procedure.

8. Consequences for Breach of this Policy

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including permanent exclusion from the UTC regardless of whether the breach is committed during the College day and regardless of whether any University equipment or facilities are used in committing the breach.

Any student who is suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with any investigation.

Where conduct is considered to be inappropriate, the UTC will liaise with Bolton's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Police as appropriate. A student may be required to hand over relevant passwords and log in details as part of an investigation.

9. Monitoring and Review

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Student Social Media Policy rests with the Principal. However, all students are obliged to adhere to, support and implement this policy.

This policy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

10. Dissemination of and Access to the Policy

All students will receive a hard copy of the policy. A copy is also available on the UTC website. All students will be required to sign to say they have read and agreed to the Social Media Policy and parents/carers will be required to counter-sign.

UTC BOLTON STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AGREEMENT

As a student at UTC Bolton I agree to use social media responsibly.

- I will keep my login, email address and password confidential. I will take care to ensure that others cannot use my accounts by always logging off when I have finished work or locking my computer when it is left unattended.
- I will not use anyone else's login, email address or password.
- I will not search, view, send or display offensive materials such as pornography.
- I will not send offensive, threatening or time-wasting messages nor post inappropriate images.
- I will only access social networking sites to enhance my learning experience.
- I will notify the Principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead if I encounter materials or messages that are inappropriate to the work of the UTC.
- I will not engage with staff of the UTC, via any social media platform.
- I understand I am responsible for the use and care of any personal device allocated to me whilst a student at UTC Bolton.
- I understand that the UTC regularly monitors social media platforms used by students.
- I understand that I must not put myself in a position where anything I post on social media can bring UTC Bolton into disrepute.
- I understand that serious misuse of social media could result in disciplinary action being taken against me and that I could be permanently excluded from the UTC.

I have read and understood the above statements and I agree to comply with the UTC Bolton rules for use of social media platforms. I understand that failure to do this could result in disciplinary action being taken against me and that I could be permanently excluded from the UTC.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Name: _____ **Year:** _____

Parent/Carer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Carer Name: _____

