



Wirral Met College

# Students' Social Media Guidance

*To be read in conjunction with PO56 Student IT Usage Policy*

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Social Media enhances many people's lives and can be a key tool in bringing people together. However, it is important that everyone uses it in a responsible way as there are some increased dangers associated with posting online.

Students of Wirral Met College are subject to all of the College's policies and procedures whether in the real or virtual world.

This extends to words and actions which are:

- Bullying;
- Vulgar, obscene, indecent, sexually explicit, threatening or other inappropriate or offensive behaviour;
- Promotion of any form of extremism, fanaticism, radicalisation or bigotry views against British Values;
- Likely to bring the College into disrepute;
- In any way unlawful.

The College does not therefore have a separate social media policy, but issues this guidance to help you consider your use of social media.

### **Remember everything on the internet is public**

You should be mindful that comments made in the virtual world of social media will be treated in the same manner as the real world, and most importantly,:

- 1) Social Media is documented and available for all to see;
- 2) Comments made privately can be passed onto others (for example retweeted) without your control, regardless of your privacy settings;
- 3) Comments made via Social Media have the potential to spiral out of control or be taken out of context;
- 4) Posts, tweets etc are available to be viewed by anyone (in particular future potential employers or media) both now and in the future.
- 5) Many organisations (including WMC) use media monitoring services so quickly become aware of social media posts relating to their organisation. This can include reviewing your comments prior to job interviews.

**You should always assume that all of your social media communication is visible to everyone anywhere and forever.**

### **The College will act upon complaints**

Wirral Met College prides itself on being responsive to its students. Our student representatives feedback on areas for improvement and can forward complaints and constructive criticism to College managers. There is also a formal complaints procedure which can be accessed through Student Services. It is likely to be more productive to complain via these routes than via social media.

You should always ensure that your posts are accurate, not misleading or damaging to your College and it is always safest to follow the correct procedures for complaints so they can be investigated fairly, rather than posting them online.

## **Your Social Media can be used in disciplinary proceedings.**

Complaints about the unacceptable use of social networking that has potentially breached the College's policies and procedures will be investigated in accordance with the College's appropriate disciplinary policy. Where practical to do so, this will include:

- Obtaining a screen capture or print copy of the alleged unacceptable content;
- Determining the source or person responsible for the content.

You should not assume that you have any "copyright" over your social media content. It can be used in any disciplinary action.

## **Inappropriate use of Social Media can be a crime**

There are increasing instances of posting to social media site being treated as a crime by police. You should be careful when posting and be aware that anonymous postings can still be traced.

## **Use within lessons**

Social media may not be used within lessons unless it forms part of the curriculum.

## **Summary**

The key points to think about when posting to social networking sites...

- 1) Does the post break College rules?
- 2) Does the post reflect how I would like to be seen 5 years from now by a potential employer?
- 3) Everyone could potentially see the post. Would I say this to their face without them being offended?
- 4) If I want to make the College aware of something I think they need to improve, wouldn't it be better to raise it via my student representative instead of via social media?