**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

The person responsible for this policy is the COLP. The policy is reviewed and updated annually.

Use of Social Media by the Firm

The firm uses the following forms of social media.

* **Facebook**  
  The firm’s Facebook account is used for marketing purposes.
* **LinkedIn**  
  The firm’s LinkedIn account is used for marketing and recruitment purposes.

Use of Private Social Media Accounts

In order to avoid any adverse impact on the firm or its clients when using social media you should bear in mind some simple principles. The firm does not intend to restrict your private use of social media where there are no implications for the firm or its clients. However if your affiliation to the firm is stated or could be discerned or inferred by a third party then your contributions or postings may reflect upon the firm. Hence in such cases in particular your adherence to the following guidelines is required.

* **Keep your social media activity separate from your professional life**

This principle has many implications, notably these.

* + Do not refer to work matters on your private social media accounts.
  + Do not use social media to communicate with clients or others about fee earning matters.
  + Do not use your firm email address to login to private social media sites.
  + Do not express potentially controversial opinions on subjects relevant to the work of the firm.
* **In particular, remember client confidentiality.**Do not comment on confidential matters. Even if you make cryptic remarks e.g. about a “nightmare client” or “hopeless case” people may be able to work out to whom you are referring.
* **Assume your words may be quoted back at you.**

Whatever your privacy settings, what you post on social media is effectively public. Even if you have posted anonymously or using a pseudonym people may be able to identify you by using information you have given about yourself. So do not say anything which would be embarrassing if published in the press or quoted back in court.

* **Think twice.**

Do not say anything which may reflect badly on yourself or the firm, for example by reason of defamatory, scurrilous or illegal content. Bear in mind that even in your private life SRA Principle 2 requires that you maintain the trust the public places in the solicitors’ profession and in the provision of legal services by authorised persons.

* **Remember cyber security.**

Criminals trawl social media sites looking for information that may help them to guess people’s passwords or to set up “spear phishing” or similar attacks. Be careful about information you publish which people might use for such purposes.

Use of Social Media for Professional Purposes

Fee earning staff are not merely allowed to maintain LinkedIn accounts, and to refer therein to their professional role and experience, but are encouraged to do so.

You should not express opinions on any social media site in which you also refer to your professional role or to the firm without first obtaining authority.

The following non-exhaustive guidelines should be borne in mind when using LinkedIn or other social media for professional purposes.

* Exercise restraint in seeking online connections with anyone you do not know and/or with whom you have not previously corresponded.
* Do not refer to firm matters or client matters unless you have been specifically authorised to do so.
* Fact-check your postings and ensure that they are truthful. If you do make an error correct it promptly.
* Take care with spelling and grammar. Errors will reflect poorly on you and the firm.
* Seek to build a reputation of trust and credibility by adopting an appropriate tone.
* Keep your comments respectful, informative and good natured. Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile or condescending communications.
* Take great care in the rare cases when you post about something controversial or potentially inflammatory.

Use of Social Media at Work

Like personal telephone calls, the firm in its discretion allows limited access to social media at work, using the firm’s computers and internet connection. However excessive or improper use of social media at work, like excessive or improper personal telephone calls, may be regarded as a disciplinary matter. The firm may withdraw access to social media at work at any time.