**SOCIAL MEDIA @ WEST LONDON COLLEGE**

**GUIDELINES FOR STAFF**

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**Author:**

**Date for review:**

**Version Number:**

1. **BACKGROUND**

Social Media is likely to be the preeminent way in which young people and adults source their news. Over half of UK adults use social media to source their news according to Ofcom. The most popular method of sourcing news is via TV, although amongst 18 – 24 year olds social media outperforms TV.

It is essential for West London College to create engaging posts to have a voice that stands out amongst other education providers and one that enhances the College reputation.

Our key channels are:

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| --- | --- |
| Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/westlondoncol> |
| Twitter | <https://twitter.com/westlondoncol> |
| Instagram | <https://www.instagram.com/westlondoncol/> |
| LinkedIn | <https://www.linkedin.com/school/westlondoncol/> |
| Wikipedia | <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ealing,_Hammersmith_and_West_London_College> |

1. **AIMS OF THE GUIDELINES**

* To provide staff and students with information on College requirements and expectations regarding social media;
* To ensure a consistent approach to social media across the College;
* To set out the risks associated with social media use;
* To set out the responsibilities of users of professional college social media account (e.g. include some twitter handles like the Park Royal account);
* To support users of College social media accounts to mitigate the risks associated with social media, protecting themselves as well as the College;
* To clarify the expectations of staff using social media in an individual professional or personal capacity;
* To encourage staff to amplify our brand message;
* To outline channels for escalation of issues or concerns;
* To prevent a full-blown PR crisis;
* To prevent a security breach.

1. **STATEMENT**To improve engagement, we will:

* Identify and work with social media champions in curriculum areas.
* Ask content creators to include hashtags and/or @WLC so that we can easily find their posts and retweet them or like and follow.
* Run social media workshops to ensure that staff are confident to make posts, go over techniques to use and explain the social media guidelines in detail.

This approach recommended as it is pragmatic as there is a limited resource within Marketing which would restrict us from being able to post as much as we really need to. It is also likely to be more effective as the people closest to the subject matter will be making the posts in a timely way.

1. **SCOPE**

These guidelines refer to three different types of social media account:

* Professional College Account – used by representatives of the College to communicate messages from a departmental or College perspective managed by an Account Administrator (e.g. @ParkRoyalCol).
* Professional Individual Account – used by an individual member of staff who identifies themselves as an employee of the College through the content of their posts or their profile’s biographical information.
* Personal Account – used by an individual primarily for non-work activity, who may or may not identify themselves as a College member of staff, for example through their profile or the content of their posts.

1. **SETTING UP A NEW PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT**

There are a number of professional social media accounts managed by staff at West London College. Before creating a new account, it is vital that staff consider whether there is a different audience or set of objectives which cannot be met through an existing account. You should consider: the target audience and their information needs; the content to be shared; how producing content and monitoring the account will be resourced etc.

You should set up the college account using a generic email address (one that will be in use after individuals depart/move on to other roles in the College) e.g. [marketing@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@wlc.ac.uk).

1. **POSTING ON PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

All posts from a professional College social media account represent the College. It is vital that messages posted are carefully considered, appropriate and do not damage the reputation of the College or otherwise bring it into disrepute. Safeguards should be put in place to minimise the risk of communication errors via social media, including checking content with a colleague before publishing. Posts must be in line with the College values.

As an employee and representative of West London College, you are expected to demonstrate best practices and appropriate etiquette on social media. Those posting content on professional College social media accounts must:

* Be respectful to all in your social media content;
* Not use swear words, hate speech or derogatory comments to other groups and communities;
* Not post confidential information about West London College, such as student recruitment information;
* Not post confidential information about students, staff or stakeholders without their permission, such as name, image, where they live, what course they study;
* Not use comments that are derogatory about anything relating to West London College, such as students, staff, stakeholders, partners, premises, and courses;
* Not use party political messages related to West London College in the posts. The College is, and must be seen to be, impartial in terms of party politics at all times.

1. **INDIVIDUALS’ PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTS**

Social media can be an important tool for colleagues’ professional activity and it can provide a helpful platform for profile raising and enhancing networks. It is recommended that staff using social media for both professional and personal reasons maintain separate accounts for these purposes.

Even when you are personally engaging on social media, a College affiliation on your profile has the ability to affect the College as a whole. If you identify your affiliation with West London College in your profile or comments, other users will naturally associate you with the College.

You should make it clear on your profile statement/bio (or elsewhere on your profile) that the views expressed are your own and do not constitute an official statement on behalf of the College.

All staff should always consider what they are posting on their accounts. Use good judgment. Please bear in mind that posts on social media may be replicated quickly, be taken out of context, and will remain public for an indeterminate amount of time. Innocently intended comments posted online may be misconstrued, as the written word can lack the nuances of face-to-face interaction. Social media posts can lead to criticism and negative press coverage, e.g., [UCL White Christmas Campus tweet](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/ucl-white-campus-tweet-christmas-apologise-snow-racism-lawn-university-college-london-a8110746.html).

1. **CUSTOMER ENQUIRIES VIA SOCIAL MEDIA**

If a stakeholder contacts you via social media and you know the correct answer, please reply.

However, if in doubt, please refer the customer comment to [Marketing@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:Marketing@wlc.ac.uk) with a screenshot and we will advise you how to reply.

1. **QUESTIONABLE CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

If you come across misinformation, news leaks, confidential information, or other questionable content regarding West London College on social media, please refer it to [Marketing@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:Marketing@wlc.ac.uk) with a screenshot.

1. **TACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES**

Staff who wish to obtain additional information about social media are encouraged to complete a Marketing-led social media workshop.

1. **What kind of information should I post related to my work on social media?**

* Examples of student work.
* Images/video of students at work or talking about their work if you have their permission in terms of being GDPR compliant. The minimum age that a student can give their consent is 16. **For students with learning disabilities this may be older.**

1. **Should I include my College affiliation in my social media bio? Or should I keep my professional accounts and my personal accounts separate?**

If you name your role and West London College in your bio, you are advised to create a separate account to your personal account so that you are posting only about work related matters on the account

If you have generic information about your job/studies in your bio you don’t need to create a separate account. For example, *Further Education Sports Teacher* or *HR specialist*.

You should always add a statement to say that all views are your own.

1. **What should I do on social media during a PR crisis?**

Please **NEVER** comment on anything relating to a PR crisis. If you receive any posts relating to a PR crisis, please screenshot them and forward them to [marketing@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@wlc.ac.uk)

1. **How do I comply with copyright law on social media?**

If you have created the image, then it is yours to use.

If another person has created a post and you re-post it, it needs to be clear that they were the original creator.

Images and clips on the internet may not be copyright free. Photo libraries such as i-Stock or Creative Commons may have the copyright free image you need to make the perfect point for your post.

1. **How do I comply with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) on social media?**

Always make sure you have permission from the people shown in the images and that they understand what the images will be used for. If you tag them and use their name then they need to understand this too.

If in doubt, you can always, film hands or backs of heads, hands (as long as individuals are not identifiable) and use these in posts.

At West London College a student aged 16 or above can give their permission, otherwise we need parental/carer permission. For students with learning disabilities we need to obtain parental/carer permission.

GDPR forms are on the Staff Portal under Marketing Templates. Please contact [marketing@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@wlc.ac.uk) for the forms if you can’t find the templates. Be aware that if students do not tick **all uses** then it will restrict the use of the image (this will be problematic if you take group photos).

1. **SECURITY OF COLLEGE MANAGED SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

College staff are responsible for ensuring that passwords and other access controls for College social media accounts are of adequate strength and kept secure. Under no circumstances should passwords be shared except with other administrators authorised to use the account. Passwords should be changed when an account administrator leaves the College or changes role within the College. Passwords must be changed when there is a compromise or suspected compromise of an official social media account.

1. **CONSEQUENCE OF BREACH**

A breach of the Social Media guidelines is when the spirit and letter of the guidelines are flouted either by mistake or on purpose and each case will be decided on its particular circumstances.

Purposeful or deliberate use of social media to damage the reputation of West London College may result in disciplinary action.

### **WHO DOES WHAT IN THE MARKETING TEAM?**

**Who manages WLC’s social media accounts?**The Marketing Manager manages the social media accounts listed on page 1 of these guidelines. To contact marketing about social media, email [marketing@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@wlc.ac.uk).

**Who covers review and posting responsibilities on a regular basis?**

* Karen O’Connor – Marketing Manager
* Anna Williams – Schools Liaison & Events Officer

Responsibilities for the Marketing team include:

* Regular posting and engagement: Karen O’Connor, Anna Williams, Richard Dadi
* Content creation graphics: Richard Dadi
* Strategy and planning: Karen O’Connor
* Advertising and Campaigns: Fleur Adolphe, Head of Marketing
* Security and passwords: Karen O’Connor
* Monitoring and listening: Karen O’Connor, Anna Williams,
* Approvals (legal, financial, or otherwise): Karen O’Connor, Anna Williams,
* Crisis response: Fleur Adolphe, Head of Marketing
* Social media training for other employees: Marketing Team

1. **ANNUAL REVIEW**

We welcome all constructive feedback on this and any other guidelines. If you would like further information on social media, or wish to send us your comments on our Social Media Guidelines, then please contact: marketing@wlc.ac.uk.

These guidelines will next be reviewed in December 2020, and will be reviewed annually.