International House Manchester

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR STAFF

Policy Statement

This social media policy provides guidelines for staff at IH Manchester to ensure professional, ethical, and responsible use of social media platforms. The aim is to protect the institution's reputation, maintain compliance with legal and ethical standards, and create a consistent brand voice while fostering positive engagement with the community.

Policy Aim

This policy applies to all staff. It covers official accounts managed by the institution as well as personal accounts when representing the institution.

Procedures and Practice

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All staff involved in an IH Manchester programme should adhere to the following principles:

- Act Professionally: Posts, comments, and messages must reflect the values and mission of IH Manchester.
- Respect Confidentiality: Do not disclose sensitive information about students, staff, partners, or operations.
- Stay Accurate: Share factual, verified information and avoid making promises or statements that could be misleading.
- Comply with Regulations: Adhere to applicable laws, including GDPR and advertising standards, as well as sector-specific guidelines such as safeguarding policies.
- Maintain a Positive Tone: Engage respectfully, even in response to criticism or complaints.

GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS

Content Creation and Approval

- Posts must align with IH Manchester's brand voice and messaging guidelines.
- Content must be approved by the designated social media manager before publication.

Engagement Rules

- Respond to comments and inquiries promptly and courteously.
- Avoid engaging in arguments or controversial discussions.

Crisis Management

- Escalate negative comments or potential PR issues to the communications or senior management team immediately.
- Do not attempt to address complaints or controversies without proper authorisation.

Use of Images and Student Information

Reviewed November 2025 – Next review November 2026 or in the event of staffing, policy, or legislative changes

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- Obtain formal consent before using images of students, staff, or identifiable individuals.
- Follow safeguarding guidelines when creating and sharing content.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Transparency

- Clearly separate personal opinions from those of IH Manchester.
- Use disclaimers, such as "Views are my own," when discussing professional topics on personal accounts.

Professional Conduct

- Do not post content that could harm IH Manchester's reputation or relationships.
- Avoid sharing confidential or sensitive information related to the institution.

Engagement

- Avoid interactions with students, parents, IH Manchester agents or partners on personal accounts.
- Be mindful of interactions with colleagues on personal accounts.
- Follow safeguarding and professional boundaries at all times.

Prohibited Activities

- Sharing false, defamatory, or discriminatory content.
- Using social media to harass, bully, or intimidate others.
- False representation of IH Manchester to promote personal businesses or unrelated activities.
- Posting content on their personal accounts which is collected while at work or on a work-related event, unless specific authorisation from a director has been granted.

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

Monitoring

- IH Manchester reserves the right to monitor official accounts for compliance with this policy.
- Personal accounts will not be monitored unless they are used to represent IH Manchester.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

- Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Legal action may be taken in cases of severe violations, such as data breaches or defamation.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

All staff involved with school social media use should complete regular training on social media usage, including updates on privacy laws, safeguarding, and best practices for digital engagement.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

Social Media Use and Responsibilities

- Social media use should not interfere with employee responsibilities at IH Manchester.
- When using IH Manchester's computer systems, social media use for business purposes is allowed (e.g., official blogs or LinkedIn), but personal use is discouraged and could result in disciplinary action.
- After-hours online activity that violates IH Manchester's Code of Conduct or any other policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action or termination.

SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS

Employees must not befriend students on social media.