

## YMCA George Williams College Social Media Policy

Updated May 2018

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

## Overview

YMCA George Williams College recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities provided by social media. Social media has created increased opportunity for media communications that have an impact on the University and as a collaborative tool for teaching, learning, research and interactions with students, parents, alumni and the business and wider community. The College has clear policies and guidelines for other aspects of its operations, however these do not explicitly cover the use of social media. This policy provides guidance for employee use of, but is not limited to, social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner

## Scope

For the purposes of this policy, the term social media is used to encompass all dynamic and interactive information and communication technologies. This policy applies to all staff, agents acting on behalf of the College, Associates, Volunteers and students and to all communications posted by them which, directly or indirectly, represent the College. It applies to online communications posted at any time and from anywhere, whether to an individual, a limited group, or the world. The policy applies to all students, employees, visitors and guests of the College using the College's technological infrastructure. YMCA George Williams College respects privacy and understands that staff and students may use social media in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the institution's reputation are within the scope of this policy. Therefore, the College requests that any contributions made in these spaces be respectful, considered and positive in their input.

## The Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of the Social Media Policy is to:

- Encourage good practice
- Protect the College, its students and its employees
- Clarify where any existing policies and guidelines apply to social media
- Promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of the College's activities

### Encouraged Practice

The College supports staff and students using social media, recognising that it can add value to existing services. Its use must be carefully considered against the functionality provided by existing College services.

### Uses

**Academic uses:** The College recognises that social media has the potential to support and advance learning opportunities and encourages its use in this way. Where existing learning technologies offer equivalent functionality, including 'Moodle,' consideration should be given to the most effective medium.

**Collaborative uses:** The College supports both internal and external collaboration and recognises that social media can provide opportunities to support this work.

**Communications and External Relations uses:** The College recognises the opportunity to communicate with prospective and existing customers through social media.

**Student uses:** The College recognises that most existing and potential future students are active users of social media. References to the College that enter the public domain provide a source of information into the needs and expectations of College students, current and future. Reference should be made to the *Student Guidelines for the use of Social Media – [Appendix 2]*

**Alumni uses:** The College recognises the opportunity to communicate with alumni through social media as part of its desire to develop an on-going relationship.

**Promotional purposes:** To establish a new social media presence, for promotional purposes, the Social Media New Presence Authorisation Form [*Appendix 3*], must be completed and returned to the Principal for consideration. The Principal may wish to speak with you to discuss your need in more detail and ascertain the appropriate solution –

contact email: [k.vintiner@ymca.ac.uk](mailto:k.vintiner@ymca.ac.uk).

### Staff use of Social Media

Staff seeking to establish social media for the purposes of teaching and learning exclusively must adhere to the *Guidelines for the use of Social Media in Teaching and Learning* (see Appendix 1), and inform their line manager, ensuring that all social media use is clearly articulated and supported.

### **Staff and student guidelines**

- All staff and students using social media must adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies such as the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.
- Staff and students must use social media responsibly without infringing on the rights and privacy of colleagues and/or students or make ill-considered comments or judgments about other staff and/or students.
- Digital communications by staff and students must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy.

### **Unacceptable Conduct**

- Unacceptable conduct includes defamatory, discriminatory, inflammatory, offensive, bullying and harassing content, invading privacy, potential breach of data protection, confidentiality and copyright. Any such conduct will be considered extremely serious by the College and will be reported to a relevant senior member of staff immediately, and escalated where appropriate.
- The College will take appropriate action where necessary.
- Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the College will deal with the matter internally via the disciplinary procedure.
- Where conduct is considered illegal, the College will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the Disciplinary Policy.

### **The following general guidelines apply to staff and students posting content via social media:**

#### **'The Dos'**

- Check with a line manager/relevant academic tutor before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the institution
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views, clarifying that the views expressed are personal and not those of the organisation
- Make it clear who is posting content and in what capacity
- Use an appropriate, professional tone and avoid any sort of discriminatory, inflammatory or defamatory language
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author

- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner, using your best judgement
- Manage your social media presence when this is on behalf of or could be viewed as being on behalf of the College, avoiding bringing the College into disrepute
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes to your line manager/relevant academic tutor
- Use common sense
- If you believe anyone to be a victim of harassment or bullying online, report it immediately

#### 'The Don'ts'

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the College into disrepute
- Don't use the College logo/branding on personal accounts
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material including feedback on students' work, or grading. Use only secure accounts on established platforms for this purpose i.e. 'Y-Moodle.'
- Don't publish personal information not relating to you without consent
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Don't link to, embed, or add potentially inappropriate content and consider the appropriateness of content given the age and capacity of the learners
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, inflammatory, offensive, harassing, or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air grievances of any kind or make people feel uncomfortable
- Don't do anything illegal or dangerous

#### **The College reserves the right to:**

- Remove comments or content that are deemed abusive or threatening in intent
- Remove comments or content that are unlawful, defamatory, harassing, slanderous, hateful, inflammatory, or obscene in nature
- Remove violations of intellectual property rights
- Remove unsolicited endorsements or third-party advertising



- Prevent access to social media spaces from users that are deemed to be engaging in any of the above practices

In such cases, members of the College community should report any of the above transgressions to the Principal (k.vintiner@ymca.ac.uk), who will take appropriate action regarding social media using the University’s technological infrastructure, or / and appropriate disciplinary measures.

**Security**

Staff and students are responsible for ensuring that passwords and other access controls for College social media accounts are of adequate strength, kept secure and must not be shared under any circumstances. Passwords should be regularly changed. Staff and students should be familiar with privacy settings and ensure that these are appropriate for both content and intended audience.

Every effort will be made to keep security software up to date. Appropriate security measures will include the use of enhanced filtering and protection of firewalls, servers, routers, work stations etc. to prevent accidental or malicious access of IT systems and social media accounts, liaising with the College’s IT contractor.

**Acknowledgements**

This Policy, and Appendices, are based on the Colleges documents of the same name.

<p><b>Related Policies, Procedures, and Guidance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Prevent Strategy</li> <li>• Staff Handbook</li> <li>• Student Handbook</li> <li>• Code of Ethics</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Complaints Procedure</li> <li>• Disciplinary Procedure</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Bullying and Harassment Policy</li> <li>• Guidelines for the use of Social Media in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Student Guidelines for the use of Social Media</li> </ul>
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Review frequency: Every three years (Next Review 22/08/20)

Executive Lead: Chief Executive & Principal (Kate Vintiner)

Date of last review: 22/08/17

## Guidelines for the use of Social Media in Teaching and Learning

### Introduction

The range of social media tools that are available, often free of charge, and which are useful in an educational context is continually expanding. These guidelines recognise the value of these tools and that many staff are already engaging with them to improve the students learning experience. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidance to staff as to the appropriate use of these new tools through:

- Raising the academics' awareness of social media;
- Encouraging and supporting the embedding of social media across all aspects of the curriculum;
- Highlighting the key issues and considerations for using social media in learning, teaching and assessment.

### Social Media – definition

In these guidelines, Social Media is used as a broad term to include software, applications and web 2.0 services that enable participatory and collaborative activity. This recognises the shift in the use of World Wide Web from a publication medium to an environment where anyone can connect and collaborate with others. The range of software and applications that are available continues to grow, broadly speaking they could be considered to include the following elements:

- The web as platform (i.e. using it to carry out a range of tasks such as editing, image sharing, email, which previously had to be done via different software packages locally)
- The participatory web: editing and interacting with other people's web pages, rather than simply reading them
- The web becoming a dynamic and better organised medium for professional and social networking and collaborative endeavours

YMCA George Williams College does not advocate the use of any particular social media. It encourages the considered application of appropriate technologies to enhance learning and teaching. Some social media tools are available through Moodle.

### **Why use social media?**

Social media tools:

- Encourage participation, social engagement and collaboration.
- Are wide-spread, easily accessible and often free.
- Often provide specific requirements not available through institutional systems.
- They may provide functionality which the College would not be able to provide in a timely or inexpensive way.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration beyond the institution.
- May allow students to retain access once they have completed the course.
- Provide the opportunity for using engaging learning approaches.

### **Benefits and risks to using social media in learning and teaching**

Participation and collaboration are key factors in how social media can be used to improve the student learning experience. In addition, their accessibility and flexibility make them easy tools to use. However, there are risks associated with the use of social media - risk of data loss; need for multiple log-ins; lack of support; privacy and copyright.

### **Risk and Good Practice Guidance for using social media**

#### ***Support***

The College is unable to provide support for externally hosted social media tools. The college will develop its resource base on the pedagogic use of these tools.

#### ***Good Practice Guidance***

Users should also be aware of the following risks and good practice guidance:

- Where students are required to set up accounts to access the social media sites staff are expected to make students aware of this need and that where access problems occur support is not available from the College.
- Information, be it learning materials or communications, may not be securely backed-up on social media sites. Staff should be aware that this presents a risk to losing data and where possible should back-up information. Students should be informed of the potential risk of losing data. Staff establishing social media sites are responsible for archiving data and closing sites once use has ended.
- Staff should inform students that use of social media represents a link between them and the service provider, not with the College. It should be made clear to students that the system being used is an external site. This might include a statement in the Student Handbook or on Y-Moodle, such as “This is an activity which involves the use of the external social media site [insert name]”.

- Staff are advised to check the Terms and Conditions of any social media prior to use, to determine who will own content and what use will be made of that content.
- Whilst uploading of learning, teaching and assessment material to internal and external systems is common-place, those doing so must ensure that it does not contain material which infringes copyright or is defamatory. Staff are advised to consider the copyright issues prior to posting material to any external site.
- Feedback for students on course work, including grades, should not be posted on social media sites. Approved and established platforms i.e. Y-Moodle should be used.

This document sets out guidelines for the use of Social Media for learning and teaching. It highlights the College's commitment to using social media as a key means to enhance learning, teaching and assessment. Using social media services should pose no problem for learning, teaching and assessment purposes if the good practice guidance and considerations are taken into account.

## **PROCEDURES**

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of the College as well as personal use of social media when referencing the College.

Staff need to know and adhere to the Colleges Code of Conduct, and other company policies, as referenced above when using social media in reference to the College.

Staff should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as the Colleges' image. The information that employees post or publish may be public information for a long time.

Staff should be aware that the College may observe content and information made available by employees through social media. Staff should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to the College its Staff, or Students.

Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include:

- Posting commentary
- Content
- Images that are defamatory
- Pornographic
- Proprietary
- Harassing
- Libelous
- Or that can create a hostile work environment.

Staff are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, Staff should check with the Human Resources Department and/or line manager in the first instance.

Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Staff should refer these inquiries to authorized College spokespersons.

If Staff find or encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, Staff should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor or line manager.

Staff should get appropriate permission before you refer to or post images of current or former Staff, members, vendors or suppliers. Additionally, Staff should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.

Social media use shouldn't interfere with Staff responsibilities at the College. The Colleges computer systems are to be used for business purposes only. When using the Colleges computer systems, use of social media for business purposes is allowed (ex: Facebook, Twitter, College blogs and LinkedIn), but personal use of social media networks or personal blogging of online content is discouraged and could result in disciplinary action.

Subject to applicable law, after-hours online activity that violates the Colleges Code of Conduct or any other company policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action or termination of contract.

If a member of Staff or other publish content after-hours that involves work or subjects associated with the College, a disclaimer should be used, such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and may not represent YMCA George Williams College positions, strategies or opinions."

It is highly recommended that Staff keep the College related social media accounts separate from personal accounts, if practical.

## Appendix 2

### Social media guidelines for students

This guide is designed to help students of YMCA George William's College make effective and safe use of social media.

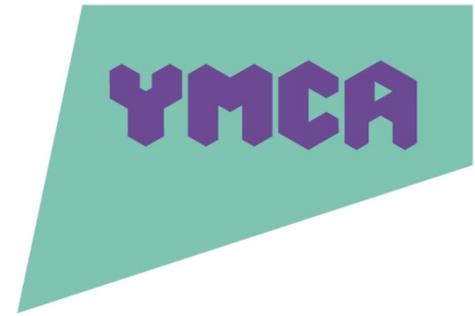
#### What is social media?

The use of social media is in many areas of our lives, personal, education and work. It potentially allows individuals and companies to communicate with large numbers of people, sharing information, ideas, interests and opinions. There are though associated risks with the use of social media. So the guidance notes below seek to help make good and fun use of these tools without impacting on reputation and security, of yourself, friends, family or the College.

There are a large and increasing number of social media tools available. Popular examples include, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snap Chat, LinkedIn and Flickr but could also include blogs and wikis.

#### Guidance notes

- Consider personal safety and privacy. Do not reveal personal details, about yourself or others, which could be used by others.
- Consider your message and audience. Treat any message as though it could be shared widely. A good rule is not to say anything that you would not say in public.
- Be accurate. All posts should be as accurate as possible, just as with contributing to any academic work.
- Be respectful. Social media is an effective way of communicating with other people, once posted it can be difficult to remove any messages. Content you post will also reflect on you and your reputation. Potential future employers may use social media to screen candidates.
- Be aware of copyright and intellectual property. Is permission needed to share the information?
- Don't use the College logo or other College images.
- Identify any professional requirements and rules. Dependent on your area of study some professional bodies and organisations might have rules and guidelines for the use of social media which you need to follow.
- When undertaking research that uses social media, ethical guidelines must be followed.
- Social media presents a valuable source of information to the University and is monitored



**Appendix 3**

**Social Media Request Form**

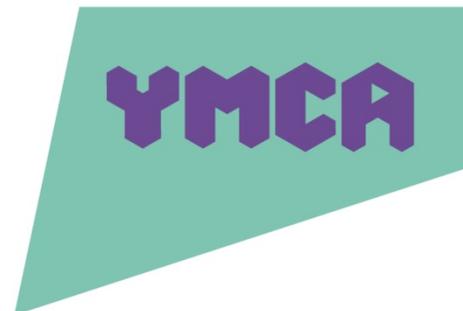
Thank you for your request. Please give detailed answers to the questions below so that we can fully understand what you need to achieve. We will then work with you to ensure you maximise the potential of social media.

**1. Please give a brief description of the proposed new social media presence.**

**2. How will the use of social media contribute to your faculty/departmental goals or the work and reputation of the College?**

**3. What do you want to use social media for? (Please highlight)**

- a) Communication (news, updates etc)
- b) Customer service
- c) Specific campaign (If so, how long for?)
- d) Crisis management (before and after)
- e) Other (please provide details)



**4. Who is the target audience? (Please highlight or tick all applicable)**

- a) UK prospective students
- b) International prospective students
- c) Current UK students
- d) Current international students
- e) Staff
- f) Local businesses
- g) National businesses
- h) International businesses
- i) Local community
- j) General public
- k) Other (please provide details)

**5. Which social media platforms would you like to use?**

**6. How often do you intend to post new content?**

- a) Between 1 and 3 times a day
- b) Twice or Several times a week
- c) Once a week
- d) Twice or Several times a month
- e) Once a month
- f) Occasional use e.g. as and when to cover external events
- g) Other (please provide details)



**Please provide the following contact details:**

Name:

Job title:

Tel:

Email address:

**Please return to**

**Kate Vintiner**

***Principal***

**[k.vintiner@ymca.ac.uk](mailto:k.vintiner@ymca.ac.uk)**