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**Staff Social Media Policy**

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| **1.** | **Policy statement** |
| 1.1 | The RVC acknowledges that the internet offers unique opportunities for interactive discussions, community engagement, and information sharing across various social media platforms. However, staff use of social media can also pose risks to the RVC’s confidential and proprietary information, reputation, and compliance with legal obligations. |
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| 1.2 | This policy outlines the standards and guidelines for the use of social media by RVC staff. It aims to protect the RVC’s reputation and the integrity and confidentially of our students and clients, ensure compliance with legal requirements and promote a respectful and productive work environment. |
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| **2.** | **Scope & Purpose** |
| 2.1 | This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels and grades, including full-time and part-time staff, fixed-term staff, and volunteers (collectively referred to as “staff” in this policy). |
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| 2.2 | The purpose of this policy is to encourage good practice and wellbeing through  guidance on the use of social media; to protect the RVC and its staff; to clarify where and how existing policies and procedures apply to social media and to promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of the RVC’s activities. |
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| 2.3 | This policy applies to all forms of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Reddit, TikTok, Snapchat, Wikipedia, and all other social networking sites and internet postings, including blogs. |
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| 2.4 | The RVC has a separate 'IT Acceptable Use Policy' regarding the general use of its IT systems, which all staff must read and understand in addition to this social media policy. |
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| 2.5 | This policy covers the use of social media whether during working hours or outside of them. It applies regardless of whether social media is accessed using RVC’s IT facilities and equipment or personal devices belonging to staff members. |
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| 2.6 | This policy operates in accordance with [Policy and Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](https://www.rvc.ac.uk/Media/Default/About/Governance,%20Policy%20and%20Legal/Policy%20and%20Code%20of%20Practice%20on%20Freedom%20of%20Speech_FINAL.pdf). |
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| 2.7 | Staff are expected to act in accordance with our policies and procedures, including:   * Data Protection Policy * IT Acceptable Use Policy * Policy and Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom * Dignity at Work and Study Policy * Equality and Diversity Policy * Lecture Capture Policy * RVC Terms of Employment   In addition to complying with relevant legislation, including:   * Data Protection Act 2018 * Equality Act 2010 * Employment Rights Act 1996 |
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| 2.8 | Staff are also expected to observe all relevant published advice, guidance, and/or codes of conduct by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. |
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| **3.** | **Behaviour and Conduct on Social Media** |
| 3.1 | The RVC does not restrict staff from accessing their personal social media accounts at work. However, colleagues must ensure that their personal use of social media does not interfere with their work responsibilities. |
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| 3.2 | Only authorised staff may post on behalf of the RVC. If staff are contacted for comments about the RVC, including in any social media channel, they must direct the inquiry to [marketing@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@rvc.ac.uk) and must not respond without written approval. |
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| 3.3 | All content posted about and/or on behalf of the RVC must be accurate, respectful and comply with RVC policies and relevant legislation. |
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| 3.4 | While RVC staff have the right to a private life and freedom of expression, as a public authority, all staff must avoid making any comments on their personal social media accounts that could harm the security or reputation of the RVC. This includes commentary on RVC policies, services, or the RVC as an employer. |
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| 3.5 | Staff are expected to:   1. comply with data protection legislation when handling personal data; 2. not post inappropriate material, including images, video, podcasts or other content that is, or may be perceived to be threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, indecent, defamatory, or hostile towards any individual, group or entity; 3. not post: 4. any social media communications that could damage the RVC business interests or reputation, whether directly or indirectly; 5. anything that constitutes, or may constitute, a criminal offence; 6. anything which may bring the RVC into disrepute or compromise the safety or reputation of colleagues, former colleagues, students, staff and those connected with the RVC. |
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| **4.** | **Oversight of this Policy** |
| 4.1 | The Information Security Group (ISG) have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for its operation to the Head of Governance and Risk. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks and ensure compliance with legal requirements lies with the Head of Governance and Risk. |
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| 4.2 | All staff are responsible for the effectiveness of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Head of Governance & Risk, Director of External Relations, and/or Human Resources. |
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| 4.3 | If any member of staff becomes aware of any content in social media that they suspect disparages or reflects poorly on the RVC or its stakeholders, they should contact their line-manager, Head of Department, Head of Governance & Risk, or the Director of External Relations. |
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| **5.** | **Breach of the Policy** |
| 5.1 | All alleged breaches of this policy will be investigated by the Head of Governance & Risk. |
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| 5.2 | Any individual suspected of committing a breach of this policy is expected to cooperate with any investigation. |
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| 5.3 | If a staff member is found to have acted in breach of this policy this may lead to suspension of their access to RVC-owned internet facilities, and/or disciplinary action being taken against them. The individual may be required to remove all relevant social media posts that are found by the RVC to be in breach of this policy. |
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| 5.4 | All staff disciplinary matters will be handled by the appropriate policies and procedures. |

**Approved by the College Executive Committee – January 2025**