



working for us

Social Media

Guidance on the expected standards of conduct

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Our Arrangements

Every day, our employees act as the ‘face’ of Glasgow City Council, often coming into contact with the people who live in and visit the City. Our reputation and success depends on the services they deliver. We recognise that key to this is ensuring that we have policies and procedures in place to ensure that employees are aware of standards and behaviours expected of them both in work and outwith work.

Our aim is to uphold the principles of our [Code of Conduct](#) ensuring that our employees behave in a manner which does not cause offence or bring the Council into disrepute.

Purpose of the Guide

We’ve developed this guidance to help you use social media responsibly. This guide outlines the key principles and conduct expected of all employees in relation to their responsibilities with the use of social media. The guide will help employees to make appropriate decisions with the contents of their blogs, postings or messages on websites or other interactive sites. The examples used in this guidance are purely examples are not an exhaustive list.

Using this Guide

Whenever you see an item in [bold and underline](#) you can click on this to see further information.

You should read this guide in conjunction with our policies listed in the index which can be found at the end of this guide.

What is Social Media?

Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies where users can easily participate in, share and create content.

The most common types of social media are:

- Social networking which is an online based forum that allows users to create a public profile within the website and form relationships with other users of the same site who access their profile. These sites can be used to share personal details, post comments, share photos and videos with other users world wide. The most popular sites are Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn and Bebo.
- Blogs which are online journals, containing entries, appearing with the most recent first. Most blogs are interactive and allow people who access the blog to leave comments and correspond with each other.
- Microblogging which is a form of social networking where users post small amounts of content online, usually through the mobile phone network. The most popular microblogging site is Twitter.
- Content communities which organise and share particular kinds of content for example videos and photos. The most popular websites are YouTube and Flickr.
- Wikis which are websites that allows people to add content or edit information to them, acting as a communal document. The best-known wiki is Wikipedia.
- Forums which are online based discussions often around a specific topic or interest.

The above list is not exhaustive.

Social media sites are being increasingly used and have the potential to damage an organisations reputation when inappropriate comments or posts are made and shared amongst the users of these sites.

Professional Use

The Council does not allow access to social networking sites for personal use from our computers at any time. These types of websites are added to a list of restricted websites. Some employees, such as teachers are permitted to make use of social media facilities to promote learning and education for example, via Glow and Wikispace. However, only if the professional boundaries are not breached, for example personal e-mail is not used and personal details are not shared.

Some other employees may have access to social media sites, for example, Twitter and Youtube. Employees who are required to post updates to Social Media sites as part of their job should do so in a professional manner which is consistent with the Council's Code of Conduct and values. When doing this they should be aware that as well as being personally liable for anything they post, when acting in the course of their work duties the employer may also be liable for the actions of their employees.

Expected Standards of Conduct when using social media

We recognise that our employees have the right to express themselves freely when using Social media. However, employees should be aware that posting of certain information or comments even in their own time and using their own equipment may be in breach of the Council's [Code of Conduct](#). This could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with our [Disciplinary Procedures](#).

When communicating, posting or agreeing to comments electronically, employees should consider the impact this may have on their job or their colleagues. When employees identify themselves as employees of Glasgow City Council they are expected to act in a manner which does not bring the Council into disrepute and act in a way that is consistent with the Council's values following the key principles detailed below.

The Council expects employees not to:

- Post comments electronically or distribute by e-mail, anything which could cause offence or that may be considered discriminatory or anything that may be considered as bullying and harassment under the terms of our [Bullying and Harassment Policy Statement](#).
- Post statements which are bigoted, hateful or discriminatory.
- Post or distribute images, video or messages that may bring the Council into disrepute for example anything that might be considered indecent, pornographic, obscene or illegal.
- Post or send confidential pupil, client or service user information which may breach the [Data Protection Act 1998](#).

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- Add clients, pupils or service users as friends on Social Networking sites as this could potentially breach confidence and trust as well as being unprofessional.
- Correspond with clients, pupils or service users from personal email accounts.
- Use the Council's logo on personal web pages.
- Post derogatory comments about the Council, working for the Council or decisions made by the Council.
- Allow interactions or communications on these sites to damage working relationships between members of staff, employer or clients.
- Post expressions of personal anger or abuse against another employee.
- Publish untrue statements about another person which could damage their reputation or working relationships.

The above list is not exhaustive.

Employees should report to management or internal audit anything that has been posted by another employee that could be offensive or attacks someone personally, or is potentially harmful to employees, pupils, clients, service users or the Council.

Detailed below is an example of inappropriate conduct which could result in disciplinary action being taken which could result in dismissal.

Example; Rachel commented on her social networking page that she had called in sick to work as she hated her job and was planning to spend the day looking for a new job. The following day another employee advises her manager that she has seen comments on Rachel's page which suggests she was not really sick. Rachel is then advised by her manager that a disciplinary investigation would be conducted which could result in disciplinary action.

Professional standards of conduct

All employees should be aware of their conduct on social media sites and the impact this may have on their employment. Employees in certain positions such as care and education should also be aware of the professional standards expected of them, for example, teachers should be aware of the General Teaching Council for Scotland's, Code of Professionalism

3. Expected Standards of Conduct

and Conduct. Many professions will have a code of professionalism and employees should familiarise themselves with the code of conduct expected by their professional body.

Detailed below is an example of inappropriate conduct which could lead to disciplinary action:

Example; Mr Ward, a secondary school teacher has been using Facebook as forum to answer questions and guide classroom related discussions despite being advised that Glow and Wikispace are available for that purpose. Comments and questions start to deviate from the original purpose and become personal and inappropriate, therefore breaching the professional boundaries. A parent complains to the head teacher who investigates the matter further. Due to the contents found on Facebook, Mr Ward is then advised that action will be taken in line with the LNCT 12: Code of Discipline for Teachers.

More serious breaches of professional conduct will be reported to the relevant professional body who may consider taking further action.

Detailed below is an example of a breach of conduct which should also be reported to the professional body.

Example; Debbie, a social care worker in a children's unit has posted pictures online of her recent birthday party. Another member of staff noticed that a 15 year old service user in Debbie's care appears in the photographs. As this breaches the professional standard expected of a social care worker an internal investigation is conducted and action is taken in line with the Disciplinary Procedures. Due to the serious nature of the allegations Debbie's manager also reports the incident to the Scottish Social Service Council.

When unacceptable behaviour occurs

Unacceptable behaviour online or through mobile technology which is harmful to the Council, brings the Council into disrepute or is harmful or offensive to employees, service users or clients of the Council won't be tolerated. We consider incidents of this nature as misconduct. If after investigation it has been found that unacceptable conduct has occurred, disciplinary action may be taken in line with our [Disciplinary Procedures](#) up to and including dismissal for serious offences.

Personal Liability

The Council expects employees to be mindful when opening accounts with various sites that they are agreeing to information being published on a public domain regardless of privacy settings. Employees should be aware that they are legally liable for anything they write or present online.

Once something is posted online the author has to assume that it remains in the public domain forever and that they remain responsible for it. For this reason it is recommended that login and password details are kept confidential at all times and appropriate security and privacy settings are in place.

When making personal views public on web pages, blogs, forums, social networking sites or other internet forums employees are advised to use a disclaimer explaining that the views contained are personal views and do not represent the view of your employer.

What is Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when someone or a group of people use a mobile phone or the internet to send or post text or images which may be offensive, intimidating, malicious, humiliating or insulting towards an individual or group of employees. Cyberbullying can take many forms, for example:

- Someone continually sending messages after being asked not to.
- Sending messages that can be threatening or upsetting.
- Setting up profiles on Social Networking sites with the sole purpose of making fun of someone.
- Posing as someone else for the purposes of publishing material in their name to cause offence, ridicule or humiliate others.
- Posting rumours or gossip and instigating others to dislike or gang up on the target.
- Sending abusive text messages, offensive pictures or video by mobile phone.

Detailed on the next page is an example of cyberbullying which could lead to disciplinary action:

Example; John is approached by a colleague who advises him that comments about his sexuality have appeared on another member of staff's social media page. John is extremely upset by this and brings this to the attention of his manager. An investigation is conducted and it comes to light that 2 other members of staff have joined in the online discussion about John's sexuality. As a result of the investigation action is taken in line with the Disciplinary Procedures.

Glasgow City Council is committed to having a workplace free from bullying and harassment. This won't be tolerated or condoned within work or outside work if it has an impact on working relationships. We will not accept any form of bullying, harassment, victimisation, intimidation or behaviour which causes an employee distress. For more information on bullying and harassment read our [Bullying and Harassment Policy Statement](#) or visit our dedicated pages on Connect at [WorkingforUs/BullyingHarassment](#).

Acceptable Use of Council IT Facilities

The use of Council IT equipment is primarily for business use however, we recognise that employees can use these facilities for personal purposes. Personal use is authorised at the discretion of management and should only take place during the user's own time. Personal use is only permitted where:

- It does not hinder the Council's business.
- It does not incur any additional cost to the Council.
- It does not adversely affect the running of the Council systems.
- It does not bring the Council into disrepute.

For more information on the permitted use of Council IT equipment read our [Policy and Guidelines on the Acceptable Use of ICT Facilities](#)

Use of E-mail

Although the Council's e-mail system is meant for business use, reasonable use of e-mail for personal use is permitted if the following guidelines are adhered to:

- Personal use of e-mail should not take place during working hours.
- Chain letters, junk mail and jokes should not be forwarded by the Council's system.
- E-mails should not contain anything offensive, discriminatory, obscene remarks or anything which might be potentially harmful to the Council.
- E-mails should not contain images which might be considered indecent, pornographic, offensive, obscene or illegal.

We will take reasonable steps to respect employee's privacy however the Council may have to access the contents of e-mail for various reasons, including:

- Ensuring Council business and security procedures are adhered to.
- Maintaining the effective operation of computerised systems.
- Conducting Council business in an employee's absence.

- Preventing/detecting unauthorised use of communications systems, criminal activities or other serious misconduct.

If an employee receives or suspects that they have received an e-mail containing anything inappropriate, offensive or potentially harmful to the Council, it is expected that they would report this immediately to their manager or Internal Audit. For more details of use of Council e-mail read our [Guidelines for E-Mail Users](#).

Detailed below is an example of inappropriate conduct when sending e-mail:

Example; Mrs Hughes, a social worker sent an e-mail containing inappropriate jokes and images from her home computer to another work colleague's home computer, encouraging them to pass it on. The e-mail found its way to another colleague's work e-mail and the e-mail chain came to the attention of management. A disciplinary investigation was conducted and action taken in line with the Disciplinary Procedures against all employees involved in the e-mail chain.

Monitoring

Employees should be aware that company computer records and company mobile phone records, including contents of the communication, can be accessed for monitoring purposes or if it is brought to our attention that an employees conduct may be breaching the terms of our policies.

Glasgow City Council does not routinely monitor comments made online by their employees outwith working hours, however if it is brought to our attention that an employee's conduct online breaches the terms of our policies, even when they are using their own equipment in their own time, action may be taken under our [Disciplinary Procedures](#) and could result in dismissal in cases of Gross Misconduct.

Further guidance

Employees requiring further information on any aspect of this guide should speak to their line manager or Service HR team.

The following checklist will take you through the main considerations when using Social Media responsibly:

Do's

Remember when opening accounts you are agreeing to your information being published on a public domain.	✓
Keep login and password details confidential and apply appropriate security settings.	✓
Remember that you remain liable for everything on your site including anything written or presented online.	✓
Remember that what you present online may not always be taken in the way you intended.	✓
Be cautious when interacting or responding to potentially contentious posts or discussions on social media sites.	✓
Report to management anything that has been posted by another employee which may cause offence or is harmful to an employee, pupil, client, service user or the Council.	✓
Report to management or internal audit if you receive or suspect you have received an e-mail containing anything inappropriate, offensive or potentially harmful to the Council.	✓

Don'ts

Don't post or distribute anything that may be considered offensive, discriminatory, sexist, racist, bigoted, hateful or anything which could be considered as bullying or harassment.	✗
Don't post or distribute images, video or messages that might bring the Council into disrepute for example anything that might be considered indecent, pornographic, obscene or illegal.	✗
Don't post or send confidential information about an employee, pupil, client or service user.	✗
Don't publish untrue statements about another person which could damage their reputation or working relationship.	✗
Don't add pupils, clients or service users as friends on social networking sites.	✗
Don't send via Council equipment including mobile phones, chain letters, jokes, junk email or abusive text, pictures or video or anything that can be threatening or upsetting.	✗
Don't pose as someone else for the purpose of publishing material in their name.	✗



Policies

[Code of Conduct for Employees](#)

[Policy and Guidelines on the Acceptable Use of ICT Facilities](#)

[Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)

[Code of Discipline, Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure](#)

Links

[Bullying and Harassment Connect Pages](#)

Guides

[Guidelines for Email Users](#)