



FOR THE FUTURE
**COOL BLUE
COLLEGE**

Social Media Policy

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Cool Blue College's work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of Cool Blue College's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to Cool Blue College's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all *staff members* and applies to content posted on both a Cool Blue College device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of Cool Blue College, and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the Cool Blue College office. However, when using the internet at work, it is important that staff refer to our IT policy (IMS-CP-041). You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during your lunch breaks. But usage should not be excessive and interfere with your duties.

Point of contact for social media

Joe McMahon is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to Joe McMahon. No other staff member can post content on Cool Blue College's official channels without the permission of Joe McMahon.

Which social media channels do we use?

Cool Blue College uses the following social media channels:

- Facebook
- Instagram

Guidelines

Using Cool Blue College's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Joe McMahon is responsible for setting up and managing Cool Blue College's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by Joe McMahon will have access to these accounts.
2. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff should ensure they reflect Cool Blue College's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that all staff should refer to when posting content on Cool Blue College's social media channels.
3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Cool Blue College, and accurately reflects Cool Blue College's agreed position.
4. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
5. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
6. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
7. If staff other than Joe McMahon wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to Joe McMahon about this.
8. Staff shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If staff are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from Cool Blue College. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
9. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
10. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
11. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via Cool Blue College's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about Cool Blue College's position on a particular issue, please speak to Joe McMahon.
12. It is vital that Cool Blue College does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

13. Staff should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

14. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Cool Blue College. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, Cool Blue College can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

15. Cool Blue College is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

16. If a complaint is made on Cool Blue College's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the management team before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to Joe McMahon.

17. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the company's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the business.

If any staff become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Cool Blue College's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to Joe McMahon.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Cool Blue College's staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with Cool Blue College's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Cool Blue College. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Cool Blue College. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about Cool Blue College's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Cool Blue College's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at Cool Blue College should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the management team. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for Cool Blue College should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the management team.

3. Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing Cool Blue College's view.

4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Cool Blue College and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the *general public, colleagues, partners and apprentices*.

5. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to Cool Blue College, they should talk to the management team immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
6. Cool Blue College is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing Cool Blue College, staff are expected to hold Cool Blue College's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from Cool Blue College, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
7. Never use Cool Blue College's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the management team.
8. Always protect yourself and the business. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely.
9. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.
10. We encourage staff to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Cool Blue College and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the management team who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring Cool Blue College into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Cool Blue College is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Cool Blue College social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the management team immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with Cool Blue College follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Cool Blue College content and other content is appropriate for them.

Review of Policy Statement

This procedure will be reviewed at minimum, on an annual basis or when necessary, by the Managing Director of Cool Blue College and the Quality & Compliance Coordinator.

Date of Review	Print Name	Position
9 th January 2023	Mark Clelland	Director
	Luke Stavers	Quality & Compliance



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