



**BUCKS
STUDENTS'
UNION**

Making life better
for students at Bucks

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Updated:
August 2026



Social Media Policy

Executive summary:

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time and student staff, and others representing Bucks Students' Union (BSU), including sports teams and societies, who use social media accounts. This policy is in place to minimise the risks to the organisation, through the use of social media, whilst recognising that employee contribution to social media is an influential way of building customer and member trust.

Policy

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media. It includes, but is not limited to, Facebook (including Facebook Messenger), Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, X, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Reddit. This also includes websites that are hosted on sites such as Squarespace, Wix or WordPress and any content hosted on blogging sites such as Medium or Tumblr. It applies to the use of social media for the organisation's purposes, as well as personal use, that might affect the reputation of BSU.

You are personally responsible for content you post or share via social media so it is essential that you respect the privacy and feelings of others at all times. You should understand that any material posted online is a permanent record which can be shared instantaneously with a potentially global audience. Once shared, you'll have limited control over its reach and audience so you should avoid posting anything that you wouldn't wish to be in the public domain.

Guidelines for the responsible use of social media:

- You should make it clear in any posts, or in your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf.
- Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications, which will be published on the internet for anyone to see. If, in the instance that someone has sent you content to post online, both you and the person that sent you the content are responsible and will be held accountable.
- When expressing personal political views, individuals should make clear they are speaking in a personal capacity and not on behalf of BSU. Staff should consider how public social media activity may affect professional relationships and public confidence in their role. If you are uncertain, or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from posting until you have discussed it with your line manager or the Digital Media Coordinator.
- In certain circumstances, there may be the need for a swift response to a critical comment that could potentially damage the reputation of BSU or reflect poorly on the organisation. In these instances, you should use your judgement and avoid getting into protracted discussions through social media channels. If you are in any doubt about responding to specific comments you should contact your line manager or escalate to an appropriate member of the Union's Senior Management team.
- For support in positively engaging with members via social media, BSU has a Communications and Marketing Department who are able to offer support and guidance.

- All official BSU social media content should, wherever reasonably practicable, meet recognised accessibility standards. . This includes captions, the use of hashtag capitalisation and appropriate use of emojis (this is due to screen readers not being able to distinguish context).
- Some filters can be fun but need to be appropriate and professional. If you are in doubt, always check with the Digital Media Coordinator beforehand and never use face-changing/morphing or 'beauty' filters.
- All of our social posts should be representative and respectful of our diverse membership. This includes the use and tone of language, colour contrast and any other aspects that might be insensitive or culturally inappropriate. If you are in any doubt, please check with your line manager or the Digital Media Coordinator.

Prohibited use

- Employees and representatives should avoid making unlawful, malicious or knowingly false statements about the Students' Union or its staff. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent lawful freedom of expression, including legitimate criticism or debate conducted respectfully and lawfully. You must not use social media to defame BSU, the staff team or any third-party that is connected with the organisation.
- You must not do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying of, any individual, eg. making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. This applies to comments being made against students, other staff members, other organisations or third parties, or false or misleading statements.
- You must not express opinions, on behalf of the Students' Union, unless expressly authorised to do so by your line manager or by the Union's Senior Management team.
- You must not post comments about confidential information, commercially sensitive information, personal data or legally privileged information.
- You must not breach copyright, eg. using someone else's images or content without permission or by failing to properly credit someone where permission has been given.
- Any misuse of social media should be reported to your line manager, as soon as possible.
- You must not use any beautifying, face-changing/morphing, unprofessional or any other inappropriate filters.

Cyber bullying

BSU does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment by or of members, including those that are part of sports teams and societies. This includes:

- Maliciously, negligently or recklessly spreading rumours, lies or gossip.
- Intimidating or aggressive behaviour which a reasonable person would consider intimidating, abusive, harassing or discriminatory.
- Offensive or threatening comments or content, which a reasonable person would consider intimidating, abusive, harassing or discriminatory.
- Posting comments, photos or other content that is deliberately, negligently or recklessly mocking an individual with the potential to harass or humiliate them, which a reasonable person would consider intimidating, abusive, harassing or discriminatory.

- Cyber bullying may also take place via other means of electronic communication, such as email, text or instant messaging platforms.

Freedom of expression

Bucks Students' Union recognises the importance of lawful freedom of expression and supports the University's commitment to academic freedom.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent staff, students or representatives from expressing lawful opinions, engaging in legitimate debate, or respectfully criticising the Students' Union, the University or public policy. This policy applies only where social media activity breaches the law, this policy, or other relevant organisational policies.

Breach of this policy

You may be asked to remove any social media content that we consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in disciplinary action and may constitute a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct. Any action taken under this policy will be proportionate, evidence-based and take account of the individual's right to lawful freedom of expression.

Alleged breaches will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the context, the individual's right to lawful freedom of expression, the impact of the conduct and the organisation's legal obligations. This policy should be read alongside the Code of Conduct, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Data Protection Policy, Disciplinary Procedure and Members' Code of Conduct.

Useful contacts

Alice Askham

Digital Media Coordinator

Tel: **01494 601 600** Email: **alice.askham@bnu.ac.uk**

Tristan Tipping

Chief Executive Officer

Tel: **01494 601 600** Email: **tristan.tipping@bnu.ac.uk**