

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Updated: September 2024



## 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 in 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, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Reddit and Google+. This also includes websites that are hosted on sites such as 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 feeling 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.
- To remain politically neutral and this applies to local and national elections along with any internal elections.
- You should ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to students and other members of Union or University staff.
- 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 Marketing 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 the Head of Communications and Marketing, even if this is outside of normal office hours.
- 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.

- You should ensure that all content is accessible. 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 Marketing 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 of the Digital Marketing Coordinator.

## **Prohibited use**

- You must avoid posting any social media messages that could damage the organisation interests or reputation, even indirectly.
- You must not use social media to defame or disparage 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 the Communications and Marketing Manager.
- You must not post comments about sensitive organisation-related topics, such as performance, or do anything to jeopardise our trade secrets, confidential information or intellectual property.
- 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, as perceived by those viewing the social media.
- Offensive or threatening comments or content, as perceived by those viewing the social media.
- Posting comments, photos or other content that is deliberately, negligently or recklessly mocking an individual with the potential to harass or humiliate them, as perceived by those viewing the social media.
- Cyber bullying may also take place via other means of electronic communication, such as email, text or instant messaging platforms.

## **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.

Failure to adhere to any of the above may result in disciplinary action.

## **Useful contacts**

### **Simon McDowell**

Head of Communications and Marketing

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### **Ian Tuazon**

Digital Marketing Coordinator

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