

	POL-IPS-026	Rev: 1.0	Valid until: 11/02/2022
	<h1>IPS International Social Media Policy</h1>		
Author or latest reviewer name	Kier Price	Date: 11/02/2021	
Authoriser name	Kier Price	Date: 11/02/2021	

Introduction

IPS International do from time to time use internet and mobile communications technology as a means of communication both at work and at home. This policy outlines the standards we require our staff to observe when using social media, usage of social media and actions taken if the policy is breached.

All employees are responsible for complying with the requirements of this policy and for reporting any breaches of the policy to their line manager or Head of Department.

If you have concerns about information or conduct on social media sites that are inappropriate, offensive, demeaning or could be seen to be bullying, these must be reported.

Social Media

In this policy, 'social media' means internet-based applications which allow users to collaborate or interact socially by creating and exchanging content, such as social networks, community sites, blogs or web forums. Examples include Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter (this list is not exhaustive).

Social media platforms allow us to build connections and to share ideas and content more broadly and quickly than ever before, and IPS International support their use. However, improper use of social media may give rise to a breach of employment contracts, our policies, defamation (i.e. damaging the good reputation of another person or organisation), misuse of our confidential information or that of our learners, employers or suppliers reputational damage.

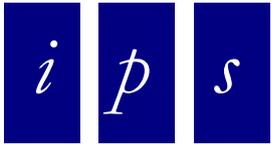
This policy does not seek to regulate how staff use social media in a purely private capacity, provided that use has no bearing on IPS International or its activities. This policy is intended to ensure that staff understand the rules governing their use of social media in relation to their work for us, or when referencing IPS International. The policy is in place to guide other in the use of these platforms and services responsibly, so as to minimise the risks set out above and to ensure consistent standards of use regarding social media.

This policy therefore applies where:

- Use of social media relates to IPS International or its activities;
- Use of social media relates to or is otherwise connected with your work, whether the intended use is personal or professional;
- Used to represent yourself, or are otherwise identifiable, as someone employed by, or otherwise associated with, IPS International.

Monitoring

Our Policy sets out IPS International's right to monitor, intercept and read communications, and applies equally to the use of social media platforms.

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We will also monitor uses of social media in general and what is said about us and about other Providers, Apprentices or Employers of which will be the responsibility of the Digital Marketing Department.

The Policy

Acceptable use of social media at work

IPS International's IT Systems are first and foremost business tools and using these for personal reasons is a privilege not a right, and is subject to the restrictions set out in this policy.

Employees are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites where this is part of the normal duties of their work.

If you are responsible for contributing to our social media activities you should remember that you are representing IPS International and follow these guidelines:

Only interact on approved platforms about sector developments;

- Ensure that all communications are of high quality (in terms of content and form) including being grammatically correct, accurate, objectively justifiable, reasonable and appropriate.
- If you become aware of adverse criticism of IPS International, inform your line Manager, Head of Department and the Digital Marketing Co-Ordinator. Do not respond without their express approval.
- Comply with the terms and conditions and policies of the social media platforms you use;
- Seek approval from your line manager or Head of Department before creating or exchanging comments on Colleagues, Learners, Employers or Suppliers.

We accept that employees may wish to use social media channels as a way of communicating personally with the public and/or friends; however its use at work should be restricted to the terms of this policy. You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites using IPS International's IT network during official rest breaks.

The above also applies to use of your own personal devices to access social media websites at work and again these should be limited to use during official rest breaks.

Personal use of social media should not interfere with your work duties and responsibilities. Excessive personal use of social media and abuse of this policy will be considered a disciplinary offence.

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Appropriate Conduct

You must not use your work email address to sign up for personal social media websites.

You should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality in anything you create or share on social media platforms. When you create or exchange content using social media you are making a public statement. As such, your content will not be private and can be forwarded to third parties without your consent. You should therefore consider the potential sensitivity of disclosing information (such as health information) to the world.

Once sensitive or confidential information (or offensive or defamatory information) has been disclosed, it cannot be recovered and this may result in liability both for IPS International and also you personally.

When creating or exchanging content on a social media platform, you must at all times comply with your contract of employment.

In particular you must:

- Not discriminate against other members of staff, students or third parties OR breach our equality policy; nor harass or bully other members of staff OR breach our harassment and bullying policy;
- Not promote political or social groups which are not aligned to IPS International
- Not breach our data protection, internet, email and communications, information security and/or whistleblowing policies;
- Respect any confidentiality obligations, and not disclose sensitive material or infringe any intellectual property or privacy rights of IPS International or any third party;
- Not make defamatory or derogatory statements about IPS International, its staff or students or employers;
- Not create or exchange or link to abusive, obscene, discriminatory, derogatory, defamatory or pornographic content;
- Not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent;

You should regularly review privacy settings on your personal social media accounts and appropriately restrict people who can read your comments. However, even if privacy and security settings are restricted, you should be aware that anything you post on social media sites may be made public by onward transmission.

You should review the content of your personal social media accounts on a regular basis and delete anything that could reflect negatively on you in a professional capacity or on IPS International.

Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.

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Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via IPS International owned social media accounts provided media consent has been given to do so.

Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on IPS International's social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any list of those whose images must not be published.

Inappropriate Conduct and Excessive Use

If an employee is found to be in breach of the policy, they will be disciplined in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. In certain circumstances, breach of this policy may be considered gross misconduct, which may lead to immediate termination of employment.

Employees should note, in particular, that creating or sharing content on a social media platform may amount to misconduct even if it takes place:

- On a personal account with appropriate privacy settings;
- Outside normal working hours; and/or
- Without using our computers, systems and networks.