

## Social Media Policy

### 1. Rationale

This Oxford English Language Centre (Oxford) policy sets out guidelines by Oxford for acceptable use of social media.

The ever-changing and inherently public nature of online communication presents a range of challenges in safeguarding the Oxford community, its staff and most importantly, the safety and security of Oxford students.

Oxford recognises that staff members may use social media outside working hours in a private capacity, however, such use can still have a negative impact upon Oxford. Consequently, Oxford wishes to ensure that staff members take great care to avoid this by acting in Oxford's best interests when on-line at all times either on Oxford or private equipment.

### 2. Scope

This Social Media Policy applies to all staff members employed by Oxford (i.e. full time, part time and casual employees), contractors and all persons who work at or with Oxford in a voluntary capacity.

### 3. Definitions

**Social media** means any form of electronic communication (including internet sites for social networking, micro blogging, Skype etc) through which users create or are involved in online communities or the online sharing of information, ideas, personal messages and other content (such as videos).

There are various forms of social media and there are always new forms of social media being developed. Currently, the main forms of social media include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites: Facebook, MySpace, Google+, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Bebo and Friendstar;
- Video and photo sharing websites: Flickr and YouTube;
- Micro-blogging sites: Twitter;
- Blogs: including corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications;
- Podcasts: including corporate podcasts and personal podcasts;
- Forums and discussion boards: e.g. local discussion boards, Whirlpool, Yahoo! Google Groups;
- Virtual Social Worlds: e.g. Second Life;
- Virtual game worlds: e.g. World of Warcraft;
- Online encyclopaedias: e.g. Wikis such as Wikipedia; and
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools.

## 4. Policy

### Use of social media in the course of employment/engagement

- 4.1 Staff members must not use Ozford's computer system to access social media unless the access is for teaching, pastoral care or educational purposes and the staff member has the permission of the Principal in writing.
- 4.2 Staff members who have permission to use social media under 4.1 must be apolitical, impartial and professional and avoid any statements that might be interpreted as advocating government policies or criticising the policies of political parties or groups.

### Personal social media use

- 4.3 Staff members may also be held accountable for any social media use both within and outside Ozford, on Ozford-owned or private equipment, where Ozford may be recognised and its name brought into disrepute.
- 4.4 Staff members are reminded that they should not have any expectation of privacy when it comes to content and information stored or posted in the social media environment. Even if staff members intend to keep the information private, it may unintentionally enter the public domain. For example, online content may inadvertently be viewed or accessed by other staff members, students or families of students.
- 4.5 When participating in social media use in a personal capacity, either at work or at home, where the staff member can be associated with Ozford in any way, the staff member must not:
- Contravene their contract of employment or engagement with Ozford, any Ozford Policy or any legal obligations to Ozford;
  - Use social media to represent Ozford or make any comment about Ozford;
  - Post anything that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, abusive or unlawful;
  - Disparage or speak adversely about Ozford, Ozford business matters or activities, its staff or its students;
  - Post anything that is contrary to the best interests of Ozford or which may damage the Ozford's reputation;
  - Use social media to communicate with current students of Ozford unless it is for education or teaching purposes and the staff member has the permission of the Principal in writing. For example, staff members must not add or accept a current student as a "friend" on Facebook. Staff members are advised to use professional discretion before accepting ex-students or parents of current students as "friends" or "followers" on social media;
  - post images that include Ozford students on social media;
  - Identify or discuss staff members Ozford or post photographs that include Ozford staff members, unless permission is first obtained from the staff member;
  - Use or disclose any confidential information Ozford which is not otherwise publicly available;
  - Use Ozford's logo or create Ozford branded accounts which could be interpreted as representing Ozford;

- Be disrespectful of Ozford, or other employees, contractors, volunteers or students of Ozford; or
- Use social media during work in a manner which detracts from their performance.

### **Monitoring**

- 4.6 This Policy must be complied with at all times. Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment or engagement. Serious cases may result in legal proceedings or referral to appropriate authorities.
- 4.7 Ozford may, where it considers appropriate, monitor social media use and use and disclose information obtained from social media in such manner as it considers appropriate.

### **5. Feedback**

Feedback or comments on this policy and procedure is welcomed by the Executive Management Team.