

## Social Media - FAQ's

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### **Q. Why does the City of London need a policy on social media?**

Social media has now become a major part of many people's lives and has changed both the way we work and communicate with each other.

Through social media, it's possible to engage and interact with a global audience almost instantaneously, opening a number of opportunities for us as an employer and you as an employee in your personal and professional life.

As the world has embraced social media, it's important we have a Social Media Policy to define how we will act when using social media both professionally and in our own time, in order to

- ensure that we uphold the City of London Corporation's values and reputation at all times;
- help employees understand the do's and don'ts when using social media;
- safeguard employees from unintentionally using social media inappropriately in a way they may affect the City Corporation, its partners and our colleagues.

### **Q. I don't use social media as part of my job so how does the Social Media Policy affect me?**

The City of London recognises that social media forms a big part of many people's lives and social networks provide a platform for anyone to broadcast their thoughts, feelings and opinions to a global audience in a matter of seconds. Due to the reach and relative permanence of social media, care needs to be taken about what you say and you should familiarise yourself with the "Guiding Principles" outlined in the Social Media Policy. You should be mindful that your behaviour online does not breach any of these principles.

- Do not mix the professional and personal in ways likely to bring the City Corporation into disrepute.
- Do not act in a way that may diminish or undermine your own or your colleague's reputation and/or effectiveness at work.
- Do not imply City Corporation endorsement of your personal views when using social media.
- Do not disclose or misuse confidential information obtained through work.

See the BARCelona guidelines for further information on Professional and Personal Use. Essentially, your conduct online should not differ from the conduct expected of you offline.

**Q. If I use social media to share thoughts about work, will I be breaching the Social Media Policy?**

We hope that you would want to share positive things about where you work. While, we recognise everyone's right to freedom of speech, talking negatively about your employer (whether that's your work, colleagues or managers) is rarely a good idea, and can be damaging.

We realise you may want to let off some steam from time to time, but be mindful of how this might be viewed and reflect on the City Corporation or colleagues, as often things can be misinterpreted or misrepresented. **Also remember that while the City of London is a politically neutral organisation, you should take care to act like a public servant at all times. This might include taking care not to criticise the actions of the organisation, it's elected Members or your colleagues**, but if you have an opinion related to your work, you should seek to discuss this with your line manager or colleagues directly.

Even if you do not specifically say that you work for the City of London, remember that it might be possible to find out where you work through online search engines. As a matter of best practice, from time to time you should try searching for yourself to see what results come up, and aim to remove any content that you no longer feel is appropriate.

**Q. My settings are set to private, does this still apply to me?**

Remember that once something is posted on the Internet, it's in the public domain, regardless of whether your settings have been set to "private". Always assume that all your social media communication is visible to anyone, anywhere and at any time, and act appropriately.

Social networking sites also alter their terms and conditions and privacy settings from time to time, so it's wise to review your settings every so often.

**Q. Will my personal activity on social network sites be monitored?**

No, your personal activity on social networking sites will not be monitored unless it has been brought to our attention that:

- You are misusing the internet during times when you should be working
- You've broadcast something online that reflects badly on the City Corporation, our partners or colleagues

Internet usage will be monitored as normal in accordance with the [Communications & Information Systems Use Policy](#).

If you've acted in a way that might breach the Guiding Principles, we will request that you remove the content. If you breach the Guiding Principles e.g. (by making defamatory comments about the City, sharing confidential information, or by offending

/ harassing another colleague and/or individual), this will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue.

**Q. I am a City of London resident, can I participate in social media lobbying about decision making of the City?**

We hope that you will usually be supportive of the City in the provision of its services and projects but if you are a resident we recognise that you may have genuine cause to be concerned about decisions and activities affecting you as a resident.

As with any use of social media you should not be rude or disrespectful, make unfounded comments or act in a way that might be breach of the Code of Conduct. If as a City of London resident you do participate in social media lobbying or comment on the City Corporations decisions, services or activities via social media channels, you should ensure that you are mindful of the overall principles of the Social Media Policy.

If you are unsure please ask you manager.

**Q. My manager, colleagues or customers have requested to add me as a “friend”, should I accept?**

This is your personal choice and might depend on the type of social network, but you should not feel, or be pressured into accepting a request you might not be comfortable with.

If you have been friend requested by a colleague and are not sure whether to accept, it's OK to politely decline the invitation as you might want to keep your professional and personal life separate.

If you are a manager, you should also consider how inviting or accepting requests can be perceived by other colleagues and staff who work for you.

**Q. Can I leave endorsements or recommendations for colleagues on social networking sites, for example LinkedIn?**

Endorsing others is a great way to recognise your colleagues for the skills you've seen them demonstrate. Recommendations are OK too, but remember they should be factual and respectful and you should not suggest that your comments are made on behalf of the City Corporation. You cannot provide employment references on behalf of the City of London Corporation through social media channels. All such enquiries should be made by prospective employers direct to the City Corporation and the relevant manager will be asked to provide information as appropriate.

LinkedIn also helpfully provide some [Community Guidelines](#) for reference.

**Q. I'm aware a colleague has acted inappropriately on social networking websites, what should I do?**

If you think that a colleague has used social media inappropriately, you should inform our Digital Communications Manager in Public Relations (Gavin Simpson) and your line manager as soon as possible. Where possible, we will work to contain any damaging posts and address the issue with the employee.

If the matter is a potential safeguarding issue, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in a School, or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in Department of Community & Children's Services should also be made aware.

We understand that you might not want your colleague to know that you have brought the issue to management attention, and where possible we will work to ensure confidentiality.

**Q. I run a blog, or am thinking of developing a blog to share my professional experiences– is this OK?**

We recognise that some staff might want to develop their personal brand by self-publishing material by blogging online. It's possible to do this through various social networking sites, for example LinkedIn provides a platform for professionals to share their experiences or views. While we don't want to limit your use of social media, just be mindful that your posts do not breach any of the Guiding Principles contained within the Social Media Policy.

**Q. I've posted something in the past that I think might be inappropriate or not in accordance with the Social Media Policy – what should I do?**

In the first few months, we expect to take a softer approach to most instances of potential misconduct while our employees get accustomed to the new policy. If you have any concern about something you may have posted which might contravene this policy, it is advisable that you go over any previous postings that you think might now be inappropriate and remove them accordingly.

However, for more serious instances of misconduct (i.e. racist or homophobic postings) that is brought to management attention, it would be inappropriate to overlook this and would need to be dealt with formally.

**Q. Who can I speak to for further information?**

If you require further information on the content of the policy, contact your HR Business Unit.