Social Media Policy

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Introduction

It is recognised that social networking can provide a legitimate service and is a powerful tool of communication is used in an appropriate manner. The impact of social media cannot be underestimated, however, this policy is not definitive but is a guideline to what is an acceptable standard of usage.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to clarify and inform learners and staff of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD the rules in terms of social media usage.

Scope

This Policy covers documentation of policy, procedures, and standards relating to the digital platforms and / or digital spaces through which we share non-academic information online, including:

- MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD domain and all subdomains and sub sites (excluding those sites whose primary purpose is the provision of digital assets for teaching and learning or research purposes)
- Official social media sites created by MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD (including repositories of material for staff and learners)
- MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's profile pages created on third party sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.
- Users of personal accounts on third party social media sites
- MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD's digital signage
- This Policy applies to all Learners of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD participating in course(s) of further education or apprenticeships

This document should be read in conjunction with the following associated documents;

- Complaints Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Internal & External Communication Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The marketing team within MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD is responsible for:

- Monitoring use of IT Resources to ensure this Policy is not breached;
- Acting on breaches to this Policy and bringing any breaches to the attention of the Senior Management Team

Each User is responsible for:

- Complying with this Policy and all other relevant policies and procedures;

- Reporting all breaches of this Policy to the Senior Management Team

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Learners must always use social media sites in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD and of others. Learners are required to comply with the following rules:

- Do not use social media sites for any purpose which is prohibited under the terms of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD ICT Policy.
- Do not use social media so as to contravene or breach the laws of UK, specifically in relation to: privacy rights, defamation law and data protection law.
- Do not use social media sites to engage in any form of bullying or behaviour which is illegal or likely to cause harassment (e.g. stalking, grooming of minors, etc.), or to intentionally offend and/or degrade others, in particular fellow learners and staff.
- Do not excessively duplicate previously posted communications (other Users may consider this as spam).
- Do not impersonate any other person nor engage in trolling (i.e. intentionally insulting and harassing people via the Internet).
- Do not post, video or record another person without their express permission.
- Do not post or upload data, including text, video, image etc. of any person without their express permission.
- Do not post any material which breaches the intellectual property rights of third parties (e.g. logos, written works, diagrams, pictures, music, video/film clips, etc.); where necessary the express permission of the rights holder should be obtained.
- When posting as individuals, Learners are asked to consider that it may be appropriate for them to identify any personal views expressed by them, on third party websites, as their own and not representing MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD.
- While recognising the importance of academic freedom, Learners must ensure that they adhere to this Policy for any official College accounts.
- Do not post material which is confidential and proprietary to MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD or which could have the effect of damaging the reputation of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD or the privacy or reputation of any third party.
- Do not post material which would identify a third party (e.g. comments, photographs, video clips etc.) without the express permission of the third party concerned.
- Ensure that information posted is accurate and not misleading.
- Do not post material for the purpose of embarrassing people or which will bring that person or MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD into disrepute.
- Do not use the name of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD, including any emblems or logos, to promote their own commercial objectives or activities.
- Do not use the name of MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD, including any emblems or logos to imply that they endorse an activity without its prior written consent.

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Third Party Social Media Sites

Third party social media sites, such as Facebook, twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn are used at the Learner's own risk and since MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD has no control over these sites, MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD cannot take any responsibility for data stored on these sites. Learners should familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions governing all social media sites and adhere to these conditions, in addition to the regulations set out in this Policy. Learners should ensure that they protect themselves, read and familiarise themselves with any privacy policy governing the site to ensure that they are happy with the uses and disclosures that may be made of their data. It is recommended that Learners maintain the highest possible privacy settings (i.e. "private" profile on Facebook). Learners should be aware that this security may not be possible on some services (such as Twitter or LinkedIn).

Think Before You Post

Even where social media accounts have been deactivated, copies of user information may still remain online. Before posting content on a social media site, Learners should consider the permanent online footprint they are creating in doing so. The nature of the Internet provides unique opportunities for copying and dissemination of information, regardless of the originator's intentions. Learners should think carefully about whether they are happy for their information to be made available in this manner, not just now, but into the future (such as in the context of exams, future job applications, etc.). The potential for copying information on the Internet makes it difficult to permanently delete user information.

Compliance with Policy

MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without notice, the postings and activities of Learners where there is reason to suspect that this Policy is being breached, or where deemed necessary by MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD for other legitimate reasons.

MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD reserves the right to disable access to social networking if there is ANY evidence that their continued use is likely to cause a degradation of network performance or security or there is a risk that it will expose MERCURI INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD to legal action. It also reserves the right, through the IT department, to disconnect ANY computer and/or Learner from the network where there is evidence that the computer is being used in a manner which breaches copyright or data protection legislation or which puts the services available to other users at risk.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under Disciplinary Procedures and may be considered as gross misconduct.

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