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**Social Media Policy**

**Document Date:** July 2019

1. **Overview**

1.1 This policy covers everything you need to know when using social media within any activity related to your student group or collective.

1.2 It applies to any student group committee member and/or collective convenor who has responsibility for an official account.

1.3 The growth and use of social media presents a risk to Royal Holloway Students’ Union (RHSU) and Royal Holloway University (RHUL), as well as individual student groups and collectives. This policy has been designed to mitigate these risks, with a particular focus on protecting the reputational integrity of all parties.

1.4 For all student groups and collectives, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Socials Policy.

1.5 For Sports Clubs only, this policy should also be read in conjunction with the Royal Holloway Sport Brand Usage Guidelines.

1.6 Other principles that guide this policy include the Charities Act 2011, The Lobbying Act 2014 (Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014) and RHSU’s Constitution and associated policies.

1. **Defining Social Media**

2.1 For the purpose of this policy, social media is any online platform or app that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum.

2.2 This includes larger platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and Snapchat but also extends to video sharing sites, forums and blogs.

2.3 You should be aware that the above list is not exhaustive and that due to the constantly changing digital environment, you should follow these guidelines in relation to any form of social media that you use.

1. **Responsibilities**

3.1 A large number of social media accounts exist across a range of platforms for student groups and collectives. These accounts are set up and managed by the groups’ committees and passwords for these accounts are held by individual committees.

3.2 Day-to-day responsibility for the accounts lies with individual committees and collective convenors.

3.3 Where any content is posted that contravenes the guidelines in this policy, it is the responsibility of the committee or collective convenor to remove the content as soon as possible and, if appropriate, take action as outlined in section 5 below.

1. **Content Guidance**
	1. When used well, social media provides really positive opportunities for you to keep in touch with and actively engage your members, helping to create and promote a positive profile and reputation for your group or collective. This will also lead to widening membership opportunities.
	2. However, social media is expansive and you need to be mindful that if it isn’t used and monitored carefully, it can also be extremely damaging. At all times you should be mindful of the purpose of your social media account and keep at the core the aspiration to engage with members in a friendly, approachable and inclusive way.
	3. When using social media you should not:
2. Bring RHSU or RHUL into disrepute, for example:
	* Making defamatory comments about individuals, other organisations or groups
	* Posting content that is inappropriate or links to inappropriate content (examples of inappropriate content include a focus on a drinking culture which contravenes the Socials Policy).
3. Breach confidentiality of the organisation, for example:
	* Revealing information that is subject to an embargo and not in the public arena.
4. Breach copyright laws, for example:
	* Using someone else’s images or written content without permission.
	* Failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.
5. Breach data protection laws, for example:
	* Posting images of individuals without their permission.
	* Sharing any personal information without explicit permission.
6. Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual directly or indirectly, for example by:
	* Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to an individual’s protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act 2010.
	* Using social media to bully another individual.
	* Posting images or content that is discriminatory or offensive.
	1. When responding to any issues raised by members, rudeness, abuse and bullying are unacceptable.
7. **Contravention of policy**
	1. In accordance with Byelaw G of our constitution relating to student groups, all student groups are encouraged to provide for your own complaints and disciplinary procedures within your own constitutions.
	2. In accordance with 3.3 above, any posted content which contravenes the guidelines in this policy should be removed by the committee or collective convenors as soon as possible.
	3. RHSU would usually expect that any concern raised could be settled informally in the first instance.
	4. Any person, group or collective considering a complaint or allegation of misconduct is urged to contact RHSU to consider what options for informal resolution may be available.
	5. For the avoidance of doubt RHSU’s own statutory complaint and disciplinary procedure ([Byelaw K and Byelaw L](https://www.su.rhul.ac.uk/voice/governance/constitution/)) is applicable to student groups and collectives.