

# <Creative Academy>

## <Social Media Policy>

### Overview

A social media policy is a document outlining guidelines for staff and students using social media, both professionally and personally, to protect the company's reputation, data, and legal standing. It defines acceptable online conduct, prohibits sharing confidential information, and warns of consequences for breaches. Key areas include transparency, security, and etiquette.

### Key Components of a Social Media Policy:

- **Purpose & Scope:** Defines what constitutes social media and who the policy applies to (employees, contractors).
- **Usage Guidelines:** Sets expectations for tone and behaviour, including distinguishing personal opinions from official company positions.
- **Confidentiality & Privacy:** Prohibits sharing proprietary, confidential, or client data.
- **Legal Compliance:** Adheres to copyright, intellectual property, and privacy laws, such as not posting defamatory, harmful, or illicit content.
- **Brand Representation:** Guidelines for authorized employees on managing official company accounts, including security protocols like 2FA.
- **Disciplinary Action:** Clearly states consequences for violating the policy, which can include disciplinary action up to termination.

### Key Guidelines for Employees:

- **Assume Public Domain:** Assume all posts are public and permanent, regardless of privacy settings.
- **Be Responsible:** Staff and students are responsible for their own words and actions online.
- **Respect Privacy:** Do not post photos or information about colleagues or students without permission.
- **Proper Conduct:** Avoid bullying, harassment, and engaging in arguments that could damage the reputation of the company.

## **Creative Academy Social Media Policy**

At Creative Academy, we recognise the power and potential of social media as a tool to engage, inform, and connect our community. We actively use social platforms to share information, celebrate achievements, and promote our work. However, we are equally aware of the reputational, legal, and ethical risks associated with the misuse of social media. This policy sets out expectations for both staff and students, ensuring that all members of the Creative Academy community use social media safely, respectfully, and professionally.

Social media channels covered by this policy include, but are not limited to; TikTok, Facebook, X, Snapchat, LinkedIn, YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Pinterest, Weibo, Youku, blogging platforms, online forums, and review sites. It does not include the hosting and management of personal websites.

## 1. Purpose and Context

Creative Academy recognises the many benefits and opportunities that social media offers. We actively use social media to engage with students, alumni, staff and the public to share information, celebrate success and enhance our profile. This policy has been created to help students understand the reputational, legal and ethical implications of social media usage and the consequences of misuse. It aims to protect students, staff, and the Academy from potential harm and clarify how our existing policies apply to the digital world.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Creative Academy students who engage in online conversations or share content on any social media platform, whether publicly or privately. It includes personal use where such activity impacts Creative Academy, its students, staff, or reputation. It applies regardless of device or location.

## 3. Social Media Platforms and Oversight

- Principal
- Quality Assurance & Business Manager
- Empower & Student Services Manager
- Content Development
- Academic Administrator

### Platforms

- Instagram
- Facebook Page
- Facebook Group
- YouTube
- Tik Tok

## 4. Student Responsibilities

Students are personally accountable for what they post online and must follow all relevant policies, including the Code of Conduct, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and IT Acceptable Use Policy. Respect, professionalism, and privacy must be maintained in all communications.

### 1. Unacceptable Content

Students must not post:

- Confidential or personal information without consent
- Threatening, harassing, obscene or defamatory material
- Content that may bring the Academy into disrepute
- Fake profiles or impersonations
- Content breaching copyright or legal restrictions

### 2. Cyberbullying

Creative Academy has a zero-tolerance policy for cyberbullying. Behaviour such as spreading rumours, harassment, mocking, sharing private images without consent, or attempting to manipulate others through digital channels is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

### **3. Intellectual Property**

Students must not share Academy content (e.g. handouts, recordings, rushes) without permission. Always check the terms and ownership implications of platforms used before posting any materials.

### **4. Representing Creative Academy**

If a student mentions Creative Academy on their social media, they must specify that they are speaking in a personal capacity. Using the Academy's name, logo, or branding is not allowed without prior approval.

5. Students may face disciplinary action if they are careless or reckless in their posts, *even if they believe the forum is private*. Recent high-profile cases have seen students across the country disciplined after offensive comments made on private messaging services, such as WhatsApp, were captured and shared. Therefore, students should remember that the Academy can act if behaviour that does not meet its expected standards is identified, whether publicly or privately.

### **6. Reporting and Breaches**

All breaches will be assessed and may lead to disciplinary measures, including suspension or dismissal. Serious incidents might be reported to the police or result in legal proceedings. Students can inform the Principal or Safeguarding Lead of breaches, providing evidence where available.

### **7. Safe and Responsible Use**

Tips for safe use:

- Think carefully before posting—remember that all content could become public
- Adjust your privacy settings with care
- Use strong passwords and enable two-factor authentication
- Never share personal or banking details
- Be aware of copyright when sharing content

## 5. Staff Responsibilities

At Creative Academy, staff are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct both offline and online. Social media provides powerful tools to promote the Academy, connect with the wider dance and arts community, and celebrate our collective achievements. However, it also presents reputational, legal, and ethical risks if misused.

### **Expectations for All Staff/Contractors and Freelancers/Self-Employed**

**Professional Conduct:** Staff are personally responsible for all content they publish on personal or professional social media accounts. All communication must demonstrate professionalism, respect, and integrity under Creative Academy's Code of Conduct, Equality and Diversity Policy, and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Clear Separation of Roles**

Staff must clearly distinguish between personal opinions and views related to Creative Academy. The use of disclaimers such as "The views expressed here are my own and not those of my employers" is strongly recommended when referencing work or teaching contexts. However, please be aware that this does not exempt you from responsibility for content that could discredit the Academy.

### **Do Not Represent Without Authorisation**

Staff must not use the Creative Academy name, logo, or branding in profile pictures, bios, usernames, or posts without explicit permission from the Quality Assurance and Business Manager or Principal.

### **Respecting Confidentiality and Privacy**

No staff member may share or discuss confidential, sensitive, or student-related information (e.g., pastoral issues, assessment outcomes, internal meetings) on any public or personal social media platform.

### **Inappropriate Content**

The following types of content are deemed unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary measures:

Comments that are discriminatory, offensive, or defamatory

Posting images or videos taken within the Academy premises without prior permission

Sharing or tagging students in posts that could breach professional boundaries

Any material that could reasonably be seen as harassment, bullying, or grooming

### **Interaction with Students Online**

- Staff/contractors must not engage in direct messaging with students through unmonitored social media platforms, including (but not limited to) Instagram, Snapchat, Grindr, Blendr, Hinge, Tik Tok and personal WhatsApp.

- The only approved methods of contact with students are:
  - Professional email
  - The monitored business WhatsApp accounts
  - CA-monitored WhatsApp class groups

Students must not be contacted/direct messaged via private social media channels, and staff should not accept friend or follow requests on any personal platforms. (implemented AY2025/26)

### **Media Enquiries and Representation**

If contacted by the press or media regarding online content or Creative Academy issues, staff must refer the matter to the Principal before responding publicly.

### **Breach of Policy**

Failure to follow this guidance may result in formal disciplinary action by Creative Academy, including the withdrawal of the contract, in accordance with SBC HR Policy and safeguarding requirements.

Any posting on social media channels should include a disclaimer

***“The opinions and ideas expressed here are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.”***

Reviewing this statement or policy

This policy or statement will be annually reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose, up to date and effective. Student representation will be part of the process to ensure that it is fair and clear. Any changes will be uploaded to the website, ensuring that it is accessible to prospective and current students. For general enquiries and/or complaints regarding this statement, please contact the Creative Academy using the information below:

- By phone - 01753 875400
- By email - [info@creativeacademy.org](mailto:info@creativeacademy.org)
- By post - Creative Academy, 73a Stoke Poges Lane, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3NY
- By website - using the contact us page on [www.creativeacademy.ac.uk](http://www.creativeacademy.ac.uk)
- For complaints - please see the complaints process on the website