SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

General

The use of social networking sites on the internet has become an increasingly important part of life for many people. VTS recognises that this provides valuable opportunities for networking, marketing and an exchange of ideas. However, the widespread use of social networking sites and the possibilities of inappropriate use which may bring VTS into disrepute or compromise a member of staff, means that a Policy is required which sets out our position on social networking by members of staff.

The purpose of this Social Media Policy is to outline the responsibilities of members of staff who utilise social networking services. Whilst this is not definitive, social media services include Facebook, MySpace, Blogging, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and also includes the use of mobile telephones for text messaging.

Scope

The Social Media Policy sets out VTS's expectations and general principles of the usage of social networking services including those which are accessed via the internet.

Social Media refers to a broad range of websites and services that allow people to connect with friends, family and colleagues, online, as well as meet people with similar interests and hobbies.

The Policy applies to all staff in any role on a permanent, temporary or fixed term basis and all learners.

Policy

Access to social media sites using VTS computers is allowed in certain circumstances. However both staff and learners must ensure that access adheres to this policy, and does not interfere with work or academic duties.

VTS operates a Social Media site, Facebook, and makes occasional posts on Twitter. This is the responsibility of the Marketing Assistant, and any posts made by or to any of these sites are moderated by the Marketing Assistant.

Staff should not accept offers from existing students to become a "friend " on their personal profile, as this could compromise VTS's Policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and the Code of Conduct.

Staff and learners should never post or send abusive, defamatory or distasteful messages or post photographs, videos or other media which could be considered in breach of Policy and Procedure.

Staff and learners will not publish personal identifiable information of VTS employees or students.

Staff and learners must not express opinions that profess to represent their own views on VTS.

Staff and learners must never post a comment about VTS that purports to represent the views of VTS, unless approved by the Managing Director.

Harassment or bullying via social media will not be tolerated.

Staff and learners must also adhere to the principles contained within this Policy outside of working hours and may be subject to disciplinary action if they fail to do so.

The inappropriate use of the Social Media sites may lead to disciplinary action.

Responsibilities

Users are responsible for ensuring that their use of social media is appropriate and consistent with this policy.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff or students for whom they are responsible are aware of this policy.

The Office Manager is responsible for the maintenance and monitoring of social media sites.

The Director is responsible for reviewing the Social Media Policy.

Guidelines to using Social Media

Separate your work life from your social media presence, for instance staff should not include learners or parents of learners in their circle of "friends '.

Do not post images or videos of staff or learners on VTS premises on your social media profile.

Remember that any posts made using social media sites are generally in the public domain.

If your social media profile lists the VTS as your employer or that you are a learner at VTS, it should also state that any views expressed are your own and do not represent VTS.

Set your profiles to "private " to ensure control over who is able to access / view your information.

Be aware that Social Networking websites are a public forum, particularly if you are a part of a network. You should not assume that entries on any website will remain private and you are strongly advised to use the appropriate privacy settings.

Ensure conduct on sites could not be seen as detrimental to VTS or bring VTS into disrepute.

Ensure any comments made on sites could not constitute bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Take care not to allow interaction on websites that may cause to damage working relationships, for instance 'liking ' a Facebook group with views that could be deemed as extremist.

Be security conscious and take steps to protect yourself from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information given out. Social Media websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

Change your social media password often.