### Social Media Policy

**1. Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this policy is to set clear standards of behaviour and conduct in the use of social media. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use. This policy also covers the use of social media in an employee’s personal life which may have an impact upon the reputation of THE ORGANISATION.

This policy applies to all employees (whether full time, part time, casually employed or temporary workers), agency workers, and contractors working for or on behalf of THE ORGANISATION and anyone using THE ORGANISATION’s information and communication technology equipment.

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Wikipedia, all other social networking sites, and all other internet communications, including blogs.

It applies to the use of social media for both work and personal purposes, whether during office hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using THE ORGANISATION IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of employees.

THE ORGANISATION recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis. However, employees’ use of social media can pose risks to THE ORGANISATION confidential information, and reputation, and can jeopardise the organisation’s compliance with legal obligations.

Employees may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Any misuse of social media should be reported to the CEO.

Users should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites without the express permission of the CEO.

**2. Use of THE ORGANISATION Social Media**

If an employee’s duties require them to speak on behalf of THE ORGANISATION in a social media environment, the employee must comply with this policy and any other social media guidelines. Employees may be asked to undergo training before posting on social media and therefore THE ORGANISATION can impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to employees’ activities on social media until training is completed.

Circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to THE ORGANISATION is also prohibited.

Likewise, if employees are contacted for comments about THE ORGANISATION for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, they should direct the inquiry to senior management. They must not respond without clear approval. Simple request for factual information can be replied to directly.

If a personal device is used to access THE ORGANISATION social media accounts, the ‘Bring your own device’ policy applies.

**3. Do’s and Don’ts when using Social Media**

The following sections of the policy provide employees with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely whether inside or outside work.

Protecting THE ORGANISATION’s reputation

* THE ORGANISATION employees must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about THE ORGANISATION or its stakeholders.
* Employees should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage THE ORGANISATION’s reputation, even indirectly.
* Unless employees are clearly speaking as part of their role within THE ORGANISATION, they should make it clear in social media postings that they are speaking on their own behalf.
* Employees should never breach copyright, for example by using someone else’s images or written content without permission, or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce an image.
* Employees are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media. They should remember that what they publish might be available to be read by the public, including THE ORGANISATION itself, future employers and social acquaintances, for a long time. Employees should keep this in mind before posting content.
* THE ORGANISATION employees should not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as THE ORGANISATION performance. Even if they make it clear that their views on such topics do not represent those of THE ORGANISATION, their comments could still damage THE ORGANISATION’s reputation.
* If employees are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they should refrain from making the communication until discussed with senior management.
* If employees see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on THE ORGANISATION, they should contact senior management. All employees are responsible for protecting THE ORGANISATION’s reputation.
* Employees are expected to comply with all THE ORGANISATION policies when communicating, in particular the Data Protection policy, Information Governance policy, Diversity and Equality Policy and the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy.

**4. Recruitment**

Depending upon the post, THE ORGANISATION may use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where THE ORGANISATION does this, it will act in accordance with its data protection and equal opportunities obligations. Candidates will be given the opportunity to comment upon any concerns.

**5. Disciplinary action over social media use**

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to THE ORGANISATION, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

Linked policies and procedures

* Disciplinary Procedure & Rules
* Diversity and Equality Policy
* Data Protection Policy
* Information Governance
* Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy

*This is a non-contractual policy which will be reviewed from time to time.*