Social Media Guidelines for Staff at The Place

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Current Update	Oct 2023
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Review Cycle	3 years
Lead Contact	Holly Conneely, Director of Communications
Approval by	Directors

Social Media Guidelines for Staff at The Place

Social media is a powerful and important part of modern life. Social media provides opportunities to:

- Express and share your ideas and creativity
- Connect with people and build a network of contacts
- Present yourself to industry peers and enhance your career opportunities.

But it can also:

- Cause harm to others and yourself
- Damage your reputation with colleagues or future employers
- Put you at risk of legal or disciplinary action

These guidelines are intended for everyone employed by The Place who uses social media professionally and/or personally and who manages others who use these platforms. Staff members who work with LCDS students should also refer to the **Staff Guidelines for Communicating with Students.**

The very broad definition of social media is “any technology platform which allows the creation and sharing of content across a virtual community”. This definition includes the well-known services like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Snapchat, but also smaller services like personal blogs, discussion forums, or even the comment sections on web sites.

These platforms are valuable promotional and communication tools for The Place and individuals. The following guidelines aim to encourage good practice in the responsible use of social media.

While acknowledging the right of staff to freedom of expression, The Place has an obligation to protect the reputation of both individual members of staff and the organisation as a whole.

The Place reserves the right to take appropriate action if staff members publish content that does not adhere to the content of this document. Members of staff are reminded that they are expected to operate within both the law and The Place policy framework in their interactions with social media just as much as in all other aspects of their working life.

The Place’s Official Social Media Channels

The Place’s social media channels are managed by the Communications team and monitored Monday – Friday 10am – 6pm. Any content shared outside these hours is pre-scheduled.

The Communications Team work strategically to maximise engagement on each platform, sharing the breadth of work at The Place and the mission, vision and values. They create

content which is suitable for specific platforms rather than sharing the same content across every platform, and are audience led – always considering which platforms are most suitable for specific stakeholders, and monitoring which content performs best to continually learn.

The Communications Team is always keen to work with colleagues, artists, students and any other relevant partners to share content and host takeovers on The Place's social media platforms It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they adhere to the guidelines in this document when using The Place's social media channels.

Considerations and approaches for The Place social media content

The following must be considered when posting on The Place social media channels:

- **Ensure the content offers real value** for the stakeholders you are trying to reach – always consider why would they want to stop scrolling to watch/read the content and what the call to action is and will lead to.
- **Align messaging with our mission, vision & values –** always be mindful of our organisational aims and how the content aligns, as they must underpin everything we say and do.
- **Plan ahead** to ensure all content is considered, and the breadth of the work at The Place is profiled without bombarding followers. Be strategic rather than reactive.
- **Be mindful of the breadth of the readership** – whilst always approaching content creation with a specific audience segment in mind, be aware channel subscribers may include potential, current or past artists, students, colleagues, funders or research partners.
- **Consciously consider perceptions** - if you are unsure whether something you post online could compromise our reputation, don't post it.

Exercise good judgement when entering any debates, offering opinions or sharing another post which can imply that The Place endorses or supports their point of view. Do not immediately respond to contentious and negative posts but instead escalate these to the Director of Communications.

- **Respond to queries** within your area of expertise and responsibilities and share the queries with a relevant colleague when necessary. For example, inform the Press and PR Manager if you receive a question regarding the content of the social media channel or someone is asking for data or statistics.
- **Correct mistakes promptly** and if something should go seriously wrong contact the Communications team immediately.
- **Safeguarding is essential -** All artists/staff/promoters who come into contact with young people or adults at risk in the building (either by directly working with them or by chance) need to know the protocol for capturing and sharing filming/photography material of

young people and adults at risk and should refer to our Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedures.

Never publish material that:

- **is liable to cause offence**, including pornographic material or abusive language
- **could be described as harassment or bullying** as defined by The Place's Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
- could be considered defamatory
- **breaches copyright**
- **discriminates** on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political or religious belief or contravenes The Place's Equal Opportunities Policy
- **reveals information which is confidential** to The Place or which is not in the public domain
- **reveals personal information** about a member of staff, student, client or customer (data, contact details or photographs) without their permission as detailed in The Place's Privacy, Data Protection and Information Security Policy (compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018)
- **damages the reputation** of The Place
- **breaches the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice** as outlined in The Place's Freedom of Speech Policy

Personal and unofficial channels

The Place has no reason to be interested in staff unofficial/personal social media activity that does not mention The Place and its activities or the member of staff's relationship to it. Nothing in these guidelines is intended to limit your freedom of speech.

However, comments made by staff concerning The Place's activities or business using their unofficial/personal social media channels may be considered subject to the guidelines above for official channels particularly if:

- The individual can be identified as being a member of The Place staff in the conversation, channel title, their profile information or through their wider digital footprint – for example if the individual has a LinkedIn profile listing them as a member of staff it should be assumed this information can be easily found.
- Any claims are made to be speaking in a professional capacity or on behalf of The Place.

In general, on unofficial/personal channels:

- **Be aware of perceptions**. If you are unsure whether something you post online could compromise your professionalism or your reputation, don't post it.
- **Use a disclaimer** if you wish to make it known that you are an employee of The Place, where appropriate use a disclaimer such as 'the views contained here are my personal views and do not represent the views of The Place.'
- **Please do not use The Place's logos** or branding elements in the name, picture, or profile information of your channel.

Complaints

Complaints made on social media will be dealt with in the same way as all other complaints, regardless of the platform. The Place has procedures for external complaints from the public, from students, and from staff, with policies for Whistleblowing, Bullying, Harassment, GDPR enquiries and grievances.

In all cases, individuals raising a concern are encouraged to identify themselves. In cases where the complaint is made anonymously, including through an unidentifiable social media handle, information will usually only be used to monitor the patterns of such incidents.

However, depending on the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern, and any evidence available in an anonymous allegation and the likelihood of being able to investigate the matter, The Place may investigate an anonymous allegation. The Place will ensure reporting parties are aware that any action by a university to an anonymous report may be limited due to natural justice, which states that the responding party has the right to know what they are accused of.

Escalation procedure

Please contact the Communications team for assistance or advice. The general office number which calls all phones is 0207 121 1020.

- **Holly Conneely**, Director of Communications, Holly.Conneely@theplace.org.uk ext. 1023
- **Suzanne Frost**, Press and PR Manager Suzanne.frost@theplace.org.uk ext.1025