

The Place

Social Media Guidelines

for London Contemporary Dance School Students

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 future employers and enhance your career opportunities.

But it can also:

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

These guidelines are intended to help you get the benefits of social media while avoiding potential problems. It uses a very broad definition of social media: “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, TikTok and Snapchat, but also smaller services like personal blogs, discussion forums, or even the comment sections on websites.

The Golden Rule

The golden rule of social media is to assume that anything you put on social media will not stay private, will not stay anonymous, and will stay on the internet forever. So always think before you post and express yourself with care. In particular:

- Don't bully, harass, or defame individuals or groups.
- Don't reveal confidential or personal information about yourself or other people
- Don't post links to content that is discriminatory or illegal.
- Don't breach copyright or intellectual property.
- Don't post evidence of you breaking the law.
- Always credit staff / artists / musicians properly if you do post online

Take particular care if you are using social media with your fellow students, perhaps as part of a study group or working on a project together. Think about how others will interpret what you say.

Examples of bullying, harassment and defamation include:

- making derogatory comments about a person based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, or other characteristics;
- posting negative or untrue things on social media sites as a way to publicly hurt someone
- sharing personal information about a person on a public website that could cause them to feel unsafe
- hacking into someone's online profile and changing any part of it, whether it be a photo or their "About Me" portion, to something that is either harmful or inappropriate
- Making a fake profile using the screen name of their target to post inappropriate or rude remarks on other people's pages

The power of social media stems from how easy it is for users to upload and share content, often without any form of moderation or means of fact-checking or verifying that information first. You can defame someone on social media by posting content that is damaging to someone's reputation or character. This content may be an exaggeration of the truth, or completely false. Other times, defamatory statements are presented as absolute truth, but contain inaccuracies or fail to provide the whole story.

And defamatory statements are not limited to the platform where they originate. If you post something on Facebook, it can easily spread to Instagram or Twitter. People share these posts because they are sensational, but they do not know whether the information is correct. By hitting "share," you may be unknowingly participating in defamation.

What might the consequences be?

Posting bullying, harassment and defamatory content on social media risks breaking the **LCDS Code of Conduct**, the **Non-Academic Misconduct Policy** (both of which can be viewed on the [Student Policies webpage](#)) or The Place's **Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy**, and potentially facing disciplinary action, or even getting into trouble with the law.

Future employers may also see the content online and decide against employing you.

What steps can I take to avoid negative consequences?

- **Understand your digital footprint** – this is the combination of all the things you do online. Be aware that it's easy for people to make connections between your different social media accounts and build up a picture of you.
- **Check your privacy settings** - while it is a good idea to assume nothing you post on social media will stay private, you should still check the privacy settings for the social media tools you use, especially if you're posting your original creative content.
- **Be aware that fraudsters and scammers use social media too** - don't assume everyone is who they claim to be, and use the same care when following links or opening attachments that you would when reading an email.
- **Be careful to keep your social media secure** - Use a strong password (we suggest three random words strung together) and consider turning on Two Factor authentication if it is available (this feature sends a confirmation text to your phone before allowing access to your social media account from an unfamiliar computer.)
- **Take a break** - Social media is a great way to discuss and challenge people's ideas, but things can get out of hand and you end up just arguing on the internet. Take a break if things are heating up. More generally, having an occasional break from social media can be a healthy thing to do.

Never contact LCDS staff through social media channels

LCDS students and staff should only ever communicate using official school channels such as Google Classroom and The Place work accounts including @theplace.org.uk email addresses, and never using personal social media accounts. This is outlined to all staff in *LCDS Staff*

Guidelines for Communications with Students.

We are aware there may be instances where an artist who you follow on social media platforms teaches at LCDS. In this situation we understand that you may want to engage with posts through 'likes', but any further interaction with them should be through the correct LCDS channels whilst they are working at The Place.

Social media accounts can be used in both personal and professional contexts so students should consider whether it feels safe and appropriate to share information to all their followers or to limit some posts to friends and family only. Another consideration might be to have separate professional and personal accounts to preserve work/life balance.

Complaints

If you have a disagreement with or a complaint about another student, a member of Staff, or the School itself, you may find that other channels are more effective in resolving matters. Consider all your options before posting to social media. The School have a **Student**

Complaints Procedure and a **Student Complaints Form**, both of which can be downloaded via the [Student Policies webpage](#). Students Reps and Year Group Coordinators can also offer independent advice to students with complaints about any aspect of their student experience.

Complaints made via social media platforms will be dealt with in the same way as all other complaints, regardless of the platform. 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.

How to report bullying and harassment on social media

At LCDS we take bullying and harassment of another individual very seriously. If you are being harassed or bullied, you should discuss the issue with Student Support staff or your Year Group Coordinator or Course Leader. If you consider that you are being bullied or harassed by a member of staff or another student via social media, you can also report this formally as detailed in the **Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy**.

March 2024

Next review date: Autumn 2026