

Christ Church Social Media Guidance

Social media is considered by Christ Church to be included within its boundaries and as part of the House Community.

As such, if any Junior Member of Christ Church uses social media to abuse a fellow student, a tutor or staff member, the college, your department, or others in the university, the Censors will regard it in the same way as verbal face-to-face abuse. Such behaviour will be investigated by the Junior Censor and if found to be abusive, the individual will be disciplined and fined.

1. Social media can bring enormous benefits and opportunities to an academic community, including by enabling global communication and collaboration and promoting healthy and lively academic debate.
2. There is, however, an inherent risk involved in using social media, in that it is an instantaneous and far reaching form of communication and inappropriate use has the potential to cause serious, and sometimes unexpected and long-term, consequences.
3. Christ Church encourages you to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media; however, wherever and however you do this, you must be aware of the potential impact on you and other users.

Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom

4. Freedom of speech and academic freedom are central tenets of university life, including in a social media context, and nothing in this guidance is intended to compromise these fundamental freedoms.

Online Etiquette

5. Remember that innocently intended comments posted online may be misconstrued, as the written word can lack the nuances of face-to-face interaction. Think twice about how you post content if you're feeling angry about something and consider the effect that this might have on the situation.

Consequences of posting inappropriate material

6. Using social media to post offensive comments, images or other content may be a breach of Christ Church's Harassment Policy, as found in The Blue Book. If so, this behavior could result in disciplinary action from the Junior Censor.

Professional Courses

7. If you are taking a course which will result in a professional qualification (such as teaching, medicine or law) you may have to meet standards of behaviour set by the national professional body or by an institution you are working for (eg a school for students on the PGCE), or by the University under the [Fitness to Practise](#) or [Fitness to Teach](#) regulations.
8. These rules may expect you to uphold the reputation of the profession, or of an institution and so may cover a very broad range of conduct, including conduct which would otherwise be acceptable. An example could be a PGCE student posting criticism on Facebook about the partnership school he or she had been placed with.
9. Content you post on social media could result in you being in breach of these rules and if serious could result in you losing the opportunity to pursue your chosen profession.

Future Employment

10. Many employers now carry out an internet search before making offers of employment, so bear this in mind when posting material online, and when setting the privacy settings for your social media accounts.

Civil and/or criminal legal action

11. Remember that various civil and criminal laws apply to content posted online.
12. Civil claims that could be brought include actions for defamation, harassment, breach of

intellectual property rights, fraudulent misrepresentation or breach of confidence.

13. Criminal offences that could occur online include harassment, stalking, hate crimes, coercive or controlling behaviour, disclosing private sexual images without consent, blackmail, malicious communications and terrorism offences.

Confidentiality

14. Be careful not to post confidential material online without permission. This might be personal confidential information about an individual or information which is confidential for professional reasons. Examples could include information about a closed meeting, personal information about another individual (such as information about their medical history, or sexuality) or details of complaints and/or legal proceedings).

Relationships with Christ Church

15. Christ Church is not responsible for, and does not hold any ownership of, any content posted on social media by its students.
16. When posting online there may be circumstances in which you risk giving the impression that you are speaking on behalf of Christ Church. If in doubt, you should consider adding a disclaimer to make it clear that you are posting in a personal capacity.

How to complain about social media content

17. If you are concerned about material another student has published on social media and believe it constitutes harassment, you should follow the Harassment Policy procedure as laid out in The Blue Book.
18. For any other concerns about material published on social media, you should contact the Junior Censor.

University Guidelines and Regulations

19. The University's *Code of Discipline* (in Statute XI), *Policy and Procedure on Harassment and Regulations Relating to the use of Information Technology Facilities* are especially relevant to social media interactions; for example, the harassment policy states that harassment can take place through communications via any form of electronic media or mobile communications device, and the IT regulations set out the obligations on users relating to the University's IT equipment and network and explain the circumstances in which users' data may be examined. The code, the harassment policy and procedure and the IT regulations are, along with other University regulations and policies that you should be aware of and comply with whilst a student of the University, explained and linked to in the [University Student Handbook](#)