

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

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Bell policy on student use of social media

Bell is committed to enabling our students to use the Internet in a safe and responsible way, taking advantage of the opportunities for discussion, information-sharing and enhanced learning they offer, without putting at risk their personal security, their current or future career prospects, or the reputation of Bell.

Objectives of this Policy

The policy aims to:

- encourage the responsible use of social media by Bell students
- outline the responsibilities of individuals for the use of social media
- highlight the potential risks of using social media for personal use
- promote effective and innovative use of social media as an integral part of their activity while at Bell
- provide clear guidelines on how breaches of this policy will be addressed
- to protect the reputation of Bell, its staff, and students

What is social media?

Social Media refers to online channels of communication that allow users to interact in the public domain by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interest. It includes, but is not limited to, social networking services such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, wikis and blogs.

What is cyberbullying?

Bullying is defined, as unfair treatment, excessive criticism, or persistent nit-picking, intimidating, aggressive or undermining behaviour, which makes the recipient(s), feel upset, humiliated, threatened or vulnerable and undermines their self-confidence and integrity. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If abuse does occur, all students must be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

Cyberbullying is the use of the Internet and related technologies to harm or harass other people, in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner. Harassment is unwanted conduct based on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion, sex (including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status), race/ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or age which has the purpose or effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Differences of attitude, background or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another; nevertheless, this does not make it acceptable. It is the purpose or effect of the behaviour rather than the motive that must be considered.

Why is it important to highlight to our students the risks relating to social media?



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While most of our students will already be experienced users of social media, they are potentially more vulnerable to abuse or bullying in that they are temporarily living and studying in another culture.

It is Bell's responsibility to help them in the responsible use of social media, and to help them avoid risks. It is also our responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of abusive behaviour and bullying of any kind, including those relating to social media.

Implementation

At their induction, students are given advice on:

- Acting responsibly online
- What to share/not to share online
- Thinking carefully before posting anything online
- Not sharing personal information with strangers
- Avoiding unsafe websites
- Not posting inappropriate content

Bell ensures that there are posters in classrooms and computer rooms to remind students to act responsibly online.

Procedure for complaints and allegations

As part of their induction to Bell, students are given information about who can help them if they are confused, worried or upset by anything they have experienced online. They are directed to the Student Services Manager/Coordinator, but also encouraged to bring any worries they have to the member of staff with whom they feel most comfortable.

Complaints about social media misuse or cyberbullying by a Bell student should be directed to the Student Service Manager/Coordinator in the first instance. Complaints and allegations will be logged and referred to the Director of Education.

Complaints or allegations concerning the misuse of social media by Bell students will be dealt with using the procedures set out in the Student Disciplinary procedure. Where a complaint involves threatening or potentially criminal online social media behaviour, Bell will escalate to the local authorities.

Other Bell policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Policy on abusive behaviour and bullying
- Social Networking Sites Policy (for staff)
- Social Networking Sites Management Guidelines



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