NEW COLLEGE
OXFORD

POLICY DOCUMENT

Social Media Policy

Social Media Policy – New College

The PR & Marketing Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of the College's official social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, contact the PR & Marketing Coordinator.

Only the Head of Outreach and Communications and the PR & Marketing Coordinator have direct access to the College's official social media accounts and groups. All content on these accounts and groups is approved by and published by the PR & Marketing Coordinator and/or the Head of Outreach and Communications.

New College social media accounts that are not managed by the PR & Marketing Coordinator are listed in the table below. The listed primary users of these accounts are responsible for ensuring they uphold this policy.

What is social media?

Social media is any online interactive tool which encourages participation, interaction and exchanges, such as blogs, discussion forums, instant messaging, and any website that allows public commenting or posting. New forms of social media appear on a fairly regular basis; at the moment, popular platforms include *Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, X, Bluesky, WhatsApp and Snapchat*.

New College actively uses the following official social media channels:

Channel	Profile name	Purpose	Primary users
Instagram	Newcollegeoxford	To engage and inform the College's internal and external audiences and stakeholders, with a focus on providing an accurate and current insight into the life of New College and its members	PR & Marketing Coordinator
Facebook	New College Oxford	To engage and inform the College's internal and external audiences and stakeholders, with a focus on providing an accurate and current insight into the life of New College, the events taking place and news-worthy items.	PR & Marketing Coordinator
X	Newcollegeox	To engage and inform the College's internal and external audiences and	PR & Marketing Coordinator

		stakeholders, with a focus on promoting news-worthy items and the events taking place in College.	
Bluesky	Newcollegeoxf.bsky.social	To engage and inform the College's internal and external audiences and stakeholders, with a focus on promoting news-worthy items and the events taking place in College.	PR & Marketing Coordinator
YouTube	Newcollegeoxford	To engage and inform the College's internal and external audiences and stakeholders, with a focus on educating viewers on the components of the College community and the research that takes place.	PR & Marketing Coordinator
LinkedIn	New College, Oxford	To engage and inform the College's internal and external audiences and stakeholders, with a focus on providing potential applicants and alumni with an insight into the career paths of alumni, as well as the promotion of College events.	PR & Marketing Coordinator
Instagram	Newcollegelibraryoxford	To promote our outstanding collections and services, including exhibitions, publications, and news, to all readers and friends worldwide of New College Library and Archives, Oxford	Head Librarian and Deputy Librarian
Facebook	New College Library and Archives, Oxford	To promote our outstanding collections and services, including exhibitions, publications, and news, to all readers and friends worldwide of New College Library and Archives, Oxford	Head Librarian and Deputy Librarian
X	Newcollegelib	To promote our outstanding collections	Head Librarian and Deputy Librarian

		and services, including exhibitions, publications, and news, to all readers and friends worldwide of New College Library and Archives, Oxford	
LinkedIn	New College, Oxford – Old Members and Friends Official	Private group for alumni only, sharing Old Member events and communications.	Development Office

Expected conduct when using New College's official social media channels:

1. The PR & Marketing Coordinator is responsible for setting up and managing New College's social media channels, with any exceptions documented above under 'Official social media channels'. Only those authorised to do so by the PR & Marketing Coordinator will have access to these accounts.
2. No other official social media channels should be set up on behalf of New College, without the approval of the Head of Outreach and Communications and the PR & Marketing Coordinator.
3. Content is published as and when required, with the option to use automated scheduling tools so that posts can be published outside working hours or when staff may be offline or on leave.
4. Content posted on New College's official social media channels should have a genuine purpose and benefit for New College, reflect the College's charitable objectives and educational environment, and use a tone of voice that would be authentic for anyone visiting us in person.
5. If any staff, Fellows or students require content to be published on the College's official social media, they are encouraged to contact the PR & Marketing Coordinator about this in the first instance to discuss how new ideas can be implemented.
6. Care should be taken with the presentation of content to avoid misunderstandings, typos, misspellings or grammatical errors.
7. The PR & Marketing Coordinator will endeavour to respond to comments Monday–Friday 9am-5pm UK time, with *ad hoc* monitoring on evenings and weekends (although commenters should not ordinarily expect a response until the next working day).
8. Not all comments on social media require a response. Comments left by users legitimately seeking information should receive a timely, polite and helpful reply. Liking or thanking users who support the content posted by the College can strengthen relationships and can be used by social media algorithms to boost the reach of content.
9. It is essential to present an honest picture of the College's activities and that our social media activities uphold standards of behaviour expected in higher education

around plagiarism. Generative AI tools are available to social media users and New College's staff should be wary that content posted by others may not be original or unaltered. Follow the University's guidance on these tools: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it/guidance-safe-and-responsible-use-gen-ai-tools

10. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics.

11. Staff should refrain from broadcasting their personal opinions or preferences through New College's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by "liking"', "sharing" or "reposting", or responding to direct messages in an inappropriate manner. If you are in doubt about the College's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Head of Outreach and Communications or the PR & Marketing Coordinator.

12. New College is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties.

Safeguarding and safety:

13. Where content clearly identifies a New College member, users of the official social media accounts must ensure consent has been obtained from the relevant individual. This applies to photography, video and audio.

14. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a young person under the age of 18 years old, staff must ensure they have the consent (verbally or ideally in writing) from a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

15. If responding to questions from a user who is likely to be a child, young person or vulnerable adult, due care should be given to the College's safeguarding responsibilities and reflect that direct messaging through social media is not generally the most appropriate forum for ongoing one-to-one communication with these groups.

16. If users of the College's official social media accounts see any member of the College community post content that raises concerns for their safety, health or wellbeing concerns, staff will refer this information to the College's Welfare team.

17. It is vital that New College's does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials (e.g. a video of a stunt or participating in a viral trend that is unsafe).

18. Staff should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage or audio. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material. Posts should not include photos

of pages from newspapers or magazines not produced by the College which may lead to invoices from the UK's Newspaper Licensing Agency.

19. If users of the College's official social media accounts see any member of the College community post content that raises concerns given our statutory duty to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism, staff will refer this information to the College Dean, who is our Prevent Lead.

Freedom of speech and moderation

20. Full information on the College's values and expectations relating to Freedom and academic freedom and how these values and expectations are applied to its activities can be found in our [Freedom of Speech Policy](#).

21. The College is strongly committed to the principle of freedom of speech and expression. However, the College does not tolerate hateful speech.

22. Users of the College's official social media accounts reserve the right to hide or remove any comments, messages, reactions or other interactions deemed hateful and/or violent.

23. In the case of hateful, violent and/or offensive comments, messages, reactions or other interactions, users of the College's official social media accounts will follow the social media platform's official reporting procedures.

24. The College agrees to abide by the Terms and Conditions published by social media platforms, to maintain its official social media presence and requires members of its private groups to do the same. Social media platforms can disable and/or reduce the functionality of accounts or groups judged to have infringed these Terms and Conditions. The College therefore reserves the right to remove content that fails to comply with these Terms and Conditions.

25. The same comment posted repeatedly should be regarded as spam and deleted.

26. Users of the College's official social media accounts will block suspected spam or bot accounts if their posts, comments or direct messages create a nuisance.

27. Users of the College's official social media accounts should not click on links included in suspicious or spam content even if this originates from a user account that was previously known to be legitimate. Instead, we will endeavour to contact the individual in case this is an indication that their account has been hacked (also known as cuckooing).

28. The College reserves the right to hide or delete any comments or posts that contain commercial solicitations, factual errors or unlawful remarks (including libel), or are wildly off-topic or referring to another organisation by a similar name. Before deleting, it may be helpful to screengrab a comment and share this record with colleagues for their information.

Complaints and crises

29. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. If a complaint is raised on New College's social media channels, this should be referred to the PR & Marketing Coordinator.

30. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to a charity's reputation. Users of the College's official social media should refer any relevant mentions of New College's to the PR & Marketing Coordinator so we can catch any issues or problems early.

31. Relevant Trustees will discuss and agree an appropriate response to an issue or crisis with the PR & Marketing Coordinator, in line with the College's Crisis Management Plan. These discussions will consider if the College is required to report a serious incident to the Charity Commission or make reports to the police or other regulators.

Editing and correcting content

32. While the utmost care should be taken, social media platforms provide users with functions to edit and/or delete content after it has been published. Errors in posts and our replies to comments should be addressed in a timely manner, with consideration given to the importance of maintaining trust with our audiences.

33. Any users who are unclear about how to proceed with editing or correcting content can contact the PR & Marketing Coordinator to discuss further.

Security and Continuity

34. Treat social media interactions with the same critical approach as you would for emails and be cautious about any links. Consult the College's IT team if you are unsure how to proceed. The National Cyber Security Centre also publishes helpful advice on using social media safely.

35. Only use authorised devices to access and manage the College's official social media accounts and associated tools. College-owned devices are maintained by the IT Team, who keep software and security systems up to date.

36. Social media accounts should be accessed using passwords that are not predictable or common. Passwords should be changed at least yearly, to ensure the official social media accounts are kept continually secure.

37. Never share password information with any unauthorised users or third parties.

Expected conduct by New College's students when using unofficial social media channels:

38. The Junior Common Room (JCR) and Middle Common Room (MCR), student societies and student clubs of New College may establish their own social media accounts to support communications with its members. For the purposes of this policy, these accounts are not considered as 'official' social media channels as they have no oversight by the College apart from its general policies on student behaviour.

39. Any account run by students on behalf of a New College affiliated group should not claim to entirely represent the College or its official social media accounts.

Accessibility

40. In order that social media content can be understood by all users, posts should:
    a. Avoid or define any jargon that prospective students and others may not be familiar with;
    b. Define any abbreviations in full; and
    c. Accompany images with alt text where possible (alternative text, which briefly describes the content of images so it can be understood by users with visual impairment).

41. Where it is not possible to accompany images with alt text, users should ensure that the content of the image is replicated in the post text

Libel

42. Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether posting content on social media in a personal or professional capacity, staff should not bring New College into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals, organisations or groups.

Copyright law

43. All staff must abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Discrimination and harassment

44. Users of the College's official social media accounts must not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official social media channel or a personal account. For example:
    a. making derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
    b. using social media to bully another individual
    c. posting images that are discriminatory or links to such content

Compliance and Complaints

45. Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Anyone who is unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy should seek advice from the PR & Marketing Coordinator.
46. Complaints about the use of the College's official social media channels should be submitted to the PR & Marketing Coordinator in the first instance.

Contact Information

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