

Procedures Manual

06.04.01 ONLINE E-SAFETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

The online safety Policy encompasses student use of the Internet, electronic communication and of mobile devices. It highlights the need to educate all students about the benefits and risks of using new technology and mobile devices and provides safeguards and awareness for users to enable them to control their online experiences. The College's Online E-Safety Policy operates in conjunction with other related policies and procedures.

SCOPE

All Students and Staff

RESPONSIBILITY

Head of Pastoral Support

Context

Students and staff have access to the Internet, and email on all networked computers and computers/devices connected to the College Wi-Fi network in the College, for research and educational purposes. West Suffolk College welcomes this as a means for improving the IT skills of users, alongside the use of other new technologies, to better ensure equality for all its students regardless of protected characteristics or individual needs.

All students receive an induction when they enrol at West Suffolk College, which includes online e-safety training.

Staff have mandatory online e-safety training once a year.

The College online e-safety Policy complies with the following policies and legislation:

- [JANET Acceptable Use \(Version 12.0, May 2016\), Editor Shirley Wood](#)
- [Defamation Act 1996](#)
- [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act \(1994\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The General Data Protection Regulation](#)
- [The Copyright Designs and Patents Act \(1988\)](#)
- [The Computer Misuse Act \(1990\)](#)

PROCEDURE

1. Internet Usage

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Students and staff are encouraged to use the internet for educational research and students will be taught how to evaluate website content as part of their course.

Anyone accessing the College internet will do so via a unique password. An Internet filtering solution is in place to monitor and safeguard students and staff from accessing inappropriate sites; reports are reviewed and monitored to ensure that the filtering is appropriate and suitable for the age range of the students using the system. Where persistent offenders access inappropriate websites, the IT Services Manager may disable the learner's user account, and log a 'Positive Behaviour Plan' ([04.26.01F1](#)) with Student Services who will take appropriate action. The learner's network access will be restored when the IT Services Manager has been notified that the issue has been resolved. Any staff accessing inappropriate sites will be subject to disciplinary action.

Any person found to be deliberately re-routing access to avoid these restrictions will also be subject to College disciplinary proceedings ([04.26.01 Student Disciplinary Procedure](#)).

The College Internet service is primarily for study-related purposes and any use of the system for private use should be outside scheduled class or study times. Users must accept full responsibility for personal bank data for example in using the College network when making private purchases online.

Be aware that the JANET/Jisc acceptable use policy strictly forbids the use of the service for any commercial activity.

The College takes reasonable steps to protect users from accidental exposure to explicit material. Any breaches of the policy must be reported to the nearest member of staff or to the Head of Student Welfare.

2. Internet Usage Rules

The rules detailed below apply whether the Internet is accessed via a College wired network connection or by one of the College's wireless networks.

- Users must not attempt to access or upload on the Internet, information that is obscene, sexually explicit, racist and defamatory, incites or depicts violence, is extremist in nature or describes techniques for criminal or terrorist acts, in line with our Prevent Duty
- Users must not intentionally access or transmit computer viruses or attempt to 'hack' into data that may damage or breach the College network.

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- Users must not infringe copyright - this includes unauthorised copying of images from the Internet without permission and downloading of music files and commercial screensavers.
- Users must not use the College Internet service for private commercial activity.
- Users must not knowingly undertake any action that will bring the College into disrepute.
- Users must not attempt to deliberately re-route their connection to avoid the College proxy server or falsify usage logs in order to escape detection.

3. Social networking and personal publishing

- Social Networks can be accessed via the College WIFI network available across the campus.
- Users should be advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them, or their location.
- Users must not place personal photos, videos or music on any College network space unless approved by tutors in specific areas of the College for educational purposes. In the instance of a staff member wanting to upload images refer to the College photographic and safeguarding policies ([04.55.01 Permission for Visits and Photos](#), [01.07.01 Safeguarding Policy](#)).
- Users should be advised on security and encouraged to set passwords, deny access to unknown individuals and how to block unwanted communications. Users should be encouraged to ensure that virtual communications areas are open only to known friends.
- Staff must not use their own personal social media accounts for learning and communication, they must set up new accounts using the course name or vocational title. Staff must also not follow or friend this account with their own personal account. Staff are expected to moderate these sites with due care and diligence.
- When posting on behalf of West Suffolk College please ensure you adhere to these guidelines-

1. **Seek Approval** – Messages that might act as a voice of the College must be approved by Senior Management.

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2. **Be Accurate** - Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible - that's how you build community.
 3. **Be Transparent** - If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the College, clearly state your role and goals. Keep in mind that if you are posting with a College username, other users do not know you personally. They view what you post as coming from the College. Be careful and be respectful. What you say directly reflects on the College. Discuss with your manager the circumstances in which you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval
 4. **Be Responsible** - What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social computing on behalf of WSC is not a right but an opportunity, so please treat it seriously and with respect. If you want to participate on behalf of the College, be sure to abide by its standard practice guidelines.
 5. **Respect Others** - Users are free to discuss topics and disagree with one another, but please be respectful of others' opinions. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.
 6. **Be a Valued Member** - If you join a social network like a Facebook group or comment on someone's blog, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Post information about topics like West Suffolk College events or news only when you are sure it will be of interest to readers. In some forums, self-promoting behaviour is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from websites or groups
 7. **Be Thoughtful** – If you have any questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain kinds of material in your role as your Tutor or manager before you post.
- When posting as an Individual please ensure you adhere to the below guidelines
 1. **Be Authentic** - Please be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a formal representative of West Suffolk College. If you identify yourself as a member of the West Suffolk College Community, ensure your profile and related

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content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues.

2. **Use a Disclaimer** - If you publish content to any website outside of West Suffolk College and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with West Suffolk College, use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent West Suffolk College's positions, strategies or opinions."
3. **Don't use the West Suffolk College Logo or make Endorsements** - Do not use the West Suffolk College logo or any other West Suffolk College marks or images on your personal online sites. Do not use West Suffolk College's name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.
4. **Protect your Identity** - While you should be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Don't list your home address or telephone number. It is a good idea to create a separate e-mail address that is used only with social media sites.
5. **Does it pass the Publicity Test** - If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or ten years from now?
6. **Respect your Audience** - Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in West Suffolk College's community. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive — such as politics and religion.
7. **Monitor Comments** - Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments — it builds credibility and community. However, you may be able to set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear. This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and to block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments.

Staff must be mindful that they are in a position of trust and ensure that they do not post, like, tweet, re-tweet, share anything that could damage their own professional reputation or bring the college into disrepute by association, as their employer.

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4. Email

The College uses a spam filtering system on the email. This monitors and blocks spam and other external email in order to protect College users and the system from offensive email, unnecessary email traffic and viruses sent by email.

All users will have access to email via their computer network account at West Suffolk College, and are encouraged to use it as part of their learning. Students may also use private Internet services such as Google or Outlook Mail when using a College computer.

However, email access opens up the College to new risks and liabilities. Students must be aware that College staff reserve the right to gain access to any email document sent by Students to recipients both inside and outside the College and documents received onto the College email from external bodies.

Student email boxes are set at defined limits by IT Services, which will not normally be extended except under special circumstances requested by a tutor.

5. Email Usage Rules

- Downloading and passing on copyright information or material, which may be considered to be violent, obscene, abusive, racist or defamatory, will be treated by the College as gross misconduct. Be aware that such material which may be contained in jokes sent by email can be considered to be harassment or bullying or in direct conflict to Prevent Duty. Any person receiving such email should report it to their tutor.
- Users must not knowingly send or receive information that will bring the College into disrepute.
- Information sent by email will become subject to the rules under the General Data Protection Regulation, and this must be complied with.
- Email must not be used for unsolicited advertising, and must not be used for the purposes of private commercial activity.
- Persons sending emails must not flood the network by sending unnecessary information to all users. This uses bandwidth on the network, and server space, and may prevent important information getting through. This is particularly important when sending attachment files and documents.

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Breach of these rules is a serious disciplinary offence, and will result in the College taking action against the offender.

6. Handling E-safety Complaints

- Complaints of Internet misuse will be dealt with by **the Principal Sixth Form Provision, The Head of Student Welfare and HR**
- Complaints concerning safeguarding and child protection issues will be dealt with according to the College Policy on [01.07.01 Safeguarding](#) and [04.38.01 Procedure for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2019](#) Students, parents and staff will be informed of the complaints procedure ([01.08.01](#)).

7. Related Policies and Procedures

- [Policy on Safeguarding 01.07.01](#)
- [GDPR Policy 01.21.01](#)
- [Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Bullying 04.31.01](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedure 04.26.01](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct 04.27.01](#)
- [Policy on Radicalisation 04.62.01](#)
- [Staff IT Policy 06.22.01](#)

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