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Registered Charity no: 1050175

Social Media Policy for Students

Metanoia Institute

Version Control

Document title: Social Media Policy for Students		No of pages:
Version Number: 3	Date first published: -	
Approved by: Academic Board	Last review date: September 2025	
Date originally approved: -	Due for next review: September 2027	

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Metanoia Institute recognises and embraces the benefits and opportunities that social media can bring as a tool. It can be used to share news, information and successes, keep the Metanoia Institute community up to date with important developments and promote healthy academic debate about controversial subjects and areas of research. 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 can impact upon staff, students and the reputation of Metanoia Institute.
- 1.2 This policy provides information for students as to the appropriate use of social media when connected to their status as a student of Metanoia Institute, or when directly or indirectly referencing the Metanoia Institute or any member of Metanoia Institute community.

2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy, social media is defined as any online interactive tool which encourages participation, interaction and exchanges. This includes existing platforms and any new applications that emerge as well as blogs, discussion forums, instant messaging and any website which allows public commenting or posting.
- 2.2 This procedure covers all students on validated, non-validated and professional and clinical courses at the Institute. This includes students on a break in study, enrolled without tuition (EWT) or enrolled with limited tuition(EWLT).
- 2.3 This policy applies to any communications within a social media platform which directly or indirectly reference the Metanoia Institute or any member of Metanoia Institute community.
- 2.4 This policy applies to social media communications made at any time, whether privately or publicly, and from anywhere, including away from campus and on personal devices, whether to an individual, to a limited group or to the world.
- 2.5 Metanoia Institute acknowledges that students may use social media in their private lives and for personal communications. Personal communications are those made on, or from, a private social media account, such as a personal page on Facebook or a personal blog. In all cases where a private social media account is used which identifies Metanoia Institute, it must be made clear that the account holder is a student at Metanoia Institute to avoid the impression that views expressed on or through that social media account are made on behalf of Metanoia Institute. In all cases, where a personal communication references a member of Metanoia Institute community the student must be aware that Metanoia Institute will treat actions that, for example, threaten, harass or bully such a member of Metanoia Institute community as falling within this policy.
- 2.6 This policy does not stand alone and should be considered in conjunction with other related student and institutional policies including the following:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy
- Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression Code of Practice
- Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- Clinical Ethics Handbook
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Fitness to Study Procedure
- Student Complaints Procedure

3. Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

3.1 Nothing in this policy is intended to have the effect of limiting either freedom of speech or academic freedom, subject to that freedom being exercised within the law. Students are encouraged to use social media to engage in academic exploration. Student should refer to the Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression Code of Practice for further information.

4. Using social media as a teaching and learning tool

4.1 Where social media is used as a teaching and learning tool through official Metanoia Institute websites and accounts, all students must read, understand and agree to the terms of use of the social media website and Metanoia Institute terms and conditions relating to the use of social media in this context before accessing and posting content on social media in a teaching and learning context.

4.2 When any social media platform is used as a tool to enhance education and student experience (for example as a discussion forum or as a tool for mentoring) by Metanoia Institute, students must comply with the requirements of this policy and comply with any additional rules and protocols that relate to that specific use.

5. Social media in your personal life

5.1 As a student you should be aware of your association with and responsibilities to Metanoia Institute, and ensure that your profiles and related content are consistent with:

- Metanoia Institute policies regarding conduct and communications
- the professional standards of the counsellors and psychotherapists as set out by their PSRB
- how you would wish to present yourself – including to future employers or clients

5.2 You must also be aware of the potential impact and permanence of anything which you post online. Therefore, you are advised to avoid posting anything online that you would not wish to be in the public domain; and/or you would not be willing to say personally to the face of another individual.

5.3 You should be aware that any digital material that you post online could reach a wider audience than you may have intended. Once digital content has been created and shared, you will have limited control over its permanence, repetition and audience.

6. Expected standards of behaviour

6.1 Students are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media and they must adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in this policy and any related policies (see section 2.6 above).

6.2 Metanoia Institute will normally treat it as foreseeable that content posted by a student on any social media platform will be disseminated to the world at large. Therefore, in the event that action is taken as a result of a breach of this policy, it will not be open to a student to claim as a defence that they did not anticipate that posted content would be revealed to or shared by third parties other than the intended recipient(s).

6.3 Communications on social media must be respectful at all times. Use of social media must not infringe on the rights, or privacy of other students, or staff and students must not make ill-considered comments or judgments about other students, staff or third parties.

6.4 Students must take particular care when communications through social media can identify them as a student of Metanoia Institute to members of staff, other students, or other individuals.

6.5 All use of social media must comply with the Metanoia Institute policies and the guidelines of UKCP and BACP, or other relevant PSRBs. Please see:

- [Guidance on the use of social media \(bacp.co.uk\)](https://www.bacp.co.uk/guidance-on-the-use-of-social-media)
- [ukcp-code-of-ethics-and-professional-practice-2019.pdf \(psychotherapy.org.uk\)](https://www.ukcp-ethics.org.uk/ukcp-code-of-ethics-and-professional-practice-2019.pdf)

6.6 The following non-exhaustive list may, according to the circumstances, be considered to be of an unacceptable nature and should never be posted:

- confidential and/or commercially sensitive information (which may include research not yet in the public domain, information about fellow students or staff or personnel matters, non-public or not yet approved documents or information);
- details of complaints and/or legal proceedings/potential legal proceedings involving Metanoia Institute;
- personal information about another individual, including contact information, without their express permission;
- comments posted using fake accounts or using another person's name without their expressed consent;
- material, including images, that could reasonably be considered to be threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, indecent, defamatory, or hostile towards any individual, group or entity, or amount to a misuse of private information or breach of confidence;

- any other posting that constitutes a criminal offence (including under the Communications Act 2003 section 127 and the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 section 33);
- anything which may bring Metanoia Institute into disrepute or compromise the safety or reputation of colleagues, former colleagues, students, former students, staff, former staff, governing bodies and those connected with Metanoia Institute, including the professions of psychotherapy, counselling psychology and counselling.

6.7 Metanoia Institute has well-established ways for students to raise any dissatisfaction or concerns that they may have, such as the Student Complaint Procedure. Concerns should be raised through such procedures, not on social media.

7. Cyber Bullying or Cyber Harassment

7.1 Metanoia Institute will not accept any form of bullying or harassment of staff, students or other members of the Metanoia Institute community.

7.2 Cyber Bullying and Cyber Harassment are considered to be any conduct on social media or through electronic communications which would be considered bullying or harassment if it occurred in person. Please refer to the Policies listed in 2.6 for further information.

8. Intellectual Property

8.1 All students must ensure that they have permission to share any third-party materials, including all images, photographs, text and videos, before uploading them to or linking to them via social media and, where sharing is permitted, should ensure that such materials or shared links are credited appropriately. In particular, students should not share Metanoia Institute materials, including but not limited to, lecture handouts, slides and assessments, by social media unless they have express permission to do so.

8.2 In addition, all students must check the terms and conditions of a social media account and/or website before uploading material to it; by posting material to social media accounts and/or websites, you may be releasing ownership rights and control of the content. For this reason, you must exercise caution in sharing any information.

8.3 Metanoia Institute is not responsible for, nor does it hold any ownership, of any content posted by its students, other than content posted by students using Metanoia Institute accounts, or in the course of their duties, as a form of professional communication.

9. Brand

9.1 Metanoia Institute's name, identity and logo may only be used in accordance with the Metanoia Institute's brand guidelines.

10. Monitoring

- 10.1 Metanoia Institute reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review within the law, without further notice, student activities using its IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings, to ensure that its rules are being complied with and such activities are for legitimate purposes.

11. Data Protection

- 11.1 The UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 apply to social media as it does in other contexts. You must ensure that all posts comply with these legal requirements.
- 11.2 No personal information, including photographs and videos, should be shared on social media without the consent of the individual to whom it relates. Students should, therefore, never post other students' and/or staff and/or a third party's personal information without their consent. Personal information is defined broadly as "any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person"
- 11.3 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 may apply to posts and content that you have uploaded to official Metanoia Institute websites, or any other website belonging to a public authority. As such, if a request for such information is received by Metanoia Institute (or other public authority), the content that you have posted may be disclosed.
- 11.4 For further information on data protection see our [Data Protection pages](#).

12. Incidents and response

- 12.1 Any student or member of staff at Metanoia as well as any third party may report an alleged breach of this policy under the Student Code of Conduct by making a Report Conduct of Concern.
- 12.2 Students are able to seek advice and guidance on this Policy from the Head of Programme or the Registrar.