



Milton Keynes Council
Policy on Social Networking Sites & Personal Internet
Presence

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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to protect the reputation of employees of Milton Keynes Council and the council as a whole from intended or unintended abuse via personal employee usage of social networking and personal internet sites.

The council recognises that such sites are increasingly useful communication tools and acknowledges the right of employees to freedom of expression. In addition, the council uses a small number of social media sites to communicate with customers. However, employees must be aware of the potential legal implications of material which could be considered abusive or defamatory and must at all time bear in mind the need to remain compliant with the council's code of conduct.

Definition

This policy applies to personal use of social networking sites (for example: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube, Snapchat etc.), personal web pages, personal space provided by internet providers and internet presence including blogs which make available personal views to the general public, including web pages or social media pages hosted by Milton Keynes Council which you are visiting as a personal user (not as a moderator).

Although LinkedIn is not primarily a social networking site employees are advised to consider applying the principles set down within this policy to their use of this and similar professional networks.

If you would like to set up a social media presence as part of official council business, please contact the Corporate Website and Social Media Manager on 01908 252786 as it is essential the council keep a central record of all sites created. Please also visit the communications page of the council intranet for guidance and information, including links to the council's social media security policy.

Guidance

- You are permitted to refer to Milton Keynes Council as your employer on social networking sites while ensuring at all times that the content reflects the principles set out within this policy.
- Do not use the council's logo on any personal web pages you may create (it is accepted that many social networking sites will automatically display the logo).
- Please be aware that using material from any copyrighted source without permission is likely to breach copyright.
- Carefully avoid bringing the council or its employees into disrepute and consult your manager if you are unsure whether the content is appropriate.

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- Milton Keynes Council reserves right to require removal of any material published by an employee which may adversely affect the council's reputation or create risk of legal proceedings against Milton Keynes Council.
- Do not reveal information which is confidential to the council - consult your manager if you are unsure.
- Employees must not use social networking sites for party political purposes.
- Do not include or use any council, data, information, contact details or photographs of employees, clients or partner organisations without the explicit written permission of the council and the explicit written permission of the data subject (e.g. person shown in any photograph).
- Do not include comments or photographs which could bring into question your professional credibility (directly bearing in mind the code of conduct)
- Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work, for personal use, using council equipment is permitted but must stay within the bounds of the council's IT Telecommunications and User Security Policy and specifically in line with the provisions that permit use of the internet while at work. This includes the use of council equipment at home such as Blackberry's or laptops whether during or outside working hours.
- Do not invite or accept as 'friends' on such sites any child or vulnerable adult you have met in the course of your employment.
- Do not use your personal mobile phone to text or WhatsApp clients you have contact with.
- No council employee should use social media to carry out covert surveillance on another employee. If you feel that such action is necessary please refer to the Social Media Guidance 1 available on the intranet at: **Legal Services > The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)**
- If you receive press or media contact regarding the content of your site and feel there may be implications for you or which in any way relates to Milton Keynes Council, do consult the Head of Communications in the Corporate Core.
- You may find it helpful to read the social media security guidance available on the communications page of the council intranet, which also offers general guidance and information.

Compliance

The council reserves the right to take action under the Disciplinary Policy should employees breach this policy or bring the council into disrepute by their actions on the internet. The Disciplinary Policy is available on the Intranet at HR A-Z.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the council's IT Security Policy which is available on the intranet at: **Information Technology > ICT & Print Services – Key Roles and Policies**

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Employees must ensure that their use of social networking sites does not breach the safeguarding guidance as set out in the Corporate Safeguarding Policy Statement available on the intranet at: **Human Resources > A-Z of Human Resources > Safeguarding – Corporate Policy Statement.**

Employee privacy and dignity

Employees are strongly recommended to check that their online privacy settings only allow “friends” to see their profiles and that the privacy settings of “friends” do not inadvertently allow access to the employee’s own profile. It is also advised that as a general measure to protect their personal safety and identity, staff do not accept friend requests from people who are not personally known to them.

Employees may wish to ask friends to check before photographs are posted which may cause them embarrassment. Employees posting their own images should bear in mind the fact that any image can easily be downloaded and manipulated and they should choose which images they share accordingly. It is recommended that employees do not post images that could be used to identify their homes or families.

All employees are advised to make themselves familiar with the parent/carer or teacher/trainer pages on the CEOP “Think You Know” site at <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

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<http://staffintranet/HR-home/>

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