



# Social Media Policy

## Introduction

The following policy aims to offer guidance and direction on student use of social media while studying at BCPC.

BCPC recognises that social media is an important part of everyday life, and a valuable way of communicating for many students. While social media can offer many benefits, there are inherent risks attached to its use. It is therefore important that students are aware of the risks that social media can present to themselves, others - which includes fellow students and clients - members of staff and the reputation and standing of BCPC.

## Purpose

This policy aims to support students to engage with social media in a responsible and informed way. The policy contains guidelines on the responsible use of social media while studying at BCPC.

Students need to be aware that the same ethical obligations of professional conduct apply in an online environment as for in-person interactions. Students should therefore always apply the UKCP ethical principles (avoiding harm, benevolence, candour, competence, honesty, human rights and social justice and personal accountability) when posting content and use ethical and professional judgement to be safe and responsible when using any form of social media.

## Scope

This policy covers all aspects of social media, social networking, in any capacity, including but not limited to; Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Tik Tok, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and wikis.

## Helping to keep you and others safe online

- If you use social media, you are responsible for how you use it to communicate. You should be aware that posts on social media even on closed profiles or groups, may not stay private, as it can be difficult to control how widely any material is posted, copied or shared.
- You should never post anything online which can identify either a client, colleague or member of staff.
- You should never post anything including images of others without the person's prior consent.

- It is not unusual for clients to look for information about their psychotherapist online, and while you may have set your privacy settings, you cannot be sure of the privacy settings of those you share materials with. It is also a good idea to check your privacy setting regularly as these can be changed by the social networking site which can default to a less secure setting.
- If you receive a friend request from a client, it is important you maintain ethical and appropriate boundaries. Any decline of a friend request from a client needs to be managed with sensitivity so they can understand why the request has been declined. You should also discuss with your clients when contracting.
- While social media can be a useful platform for sharing ideas and views with others, it is important to remember you are member of a profession and a student of BCPC and any comments should reflect the ethical principles and values of BACP / UKCP and BCPC.

### **Cyber Bullying**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online and can occur through text, apps, social media forums and can include sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

You should never post comments about someone else which could be considered threatening or bullying behaviour or constitutes a criminal offence.

For example, you should not:

- say defamatory things about people or organisations;
- say anything that is or could be construed as discriminatory;
- use language which may be deemed as offensive to others;
- engage in any criminal activity;
- tell lies or mislead people; or
- post inappropriate pictures or videos

### **Student Forums**

Student groups often set up shared fora within their training groups for the purpose of sharing resources, references or course information. You should be aware of the boundaries of such groups – they should never be used to discuss issues that have arisen in group settings or refer to material from any confidential setting on the course. If social relationships develop as a result of the course we ask that you make mutual agreements to message each other outside the course day on a platform or list other than the group forum.

### **Support**

If you are aware of the misuse of social media or you feel you have been a victim of cyber bullying please contact the BCPC office for advice.