

# **Social Media Policy/Guidelines**

## **Introduction**

The use of online social and business sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn and all other public online communications is now commonplace and used by people to maintain contact with friends as well as being employed in certain circumstances as a work tool.

As a proactive and innovative organisation, Bright Path Mediation actively welcomes and supports the use of these tools in the workplace, as they help in publicising and raising awareness of the unique work we do.

However, there have been a number of cases where the use of social media has harmed the reputation of an employer or its employees and volunteers. This policy is intended to help employees and volunteers avoid potential pitfalls.

If information on any of the sites we use raises concern for you, you must contact your line manager.

## **Scope and Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to minimise risks to our business through the use of social media.

This policy deals with all forms of social media including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia, Instagram, and Tumblr.

When based at or seconded to other organisations Bright Path Mediation members of staff will be expected to comply with the host organisations policies.

This policy outlines Bright Path Mediation expectations of its staff regarding the use of social or business media.

## **Breaches of the Policy**

Whether accessed at work or at home, the following can result in disciplinary action including dismissal:

Any reference, direct or indirect, on social or business networking sites, blogs or other such sites, to your employer, employment, individuals or organisations, or funding partners and members that could cause Bright Path Mediation reputation to be damaged;

Or

Use of a site that contravenes Bright Path Mediation policy or an illegal site;

Or

Use of a site where Bright Path Mediation or your individual duty of confidentiality is breached, where the dignity at work of colleagues and volunteers are undermined or the values of Bright Path Mediation are compromised, where any other policies of Bright Path Mediation are breached

### **Use of Social and Business Network Sites**

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum.

**Best interests:** You are expected, when using social and business networking sites and the internet, to act in all situations in the best interests of Bright Path Mediation

**Occasional Personal Use:** Occasional personal use of social media is permitted so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity. Personal use is strictly only acceptable during lunch breaks, or during work time when work related and with the prior express permission of your line manager, bearing in mind best interests.

**Social or business networking activities should not interfere with your primary job responsibilities.**

**Disrepute:** You must not use sites in such a way that Bright Path Mediation interests or reputation is or may be damaged whether directly or indirectly.

You must not use social media to defame or disparage Bright Path Mediation, our staff or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.

**Confidentiality:** You are not to refer to or publish contact details or pictures of any staff, volunteers, members, supporters, children or young people without obtaining express written permission to do so from the parties concerned. In all circumstances you must inform your line manager prior to publishing.

Confidential information is defined as any information that is described as such by Bright Path Mediation as the employer. This shall include any personal information, embargoed press releases, and any information, not legitimately available to the public, which relates to the commercial, financial and other activities of Bright Path Mediation

Information shared on social and business networking sites, or personal blogs, even in private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and defamation laws and may give rise to claims against an individual or Bright Path Mediation.

**Remember: Once you make a comment online it is extremely difficult to remove the comment.**

**Dignity at work:** Sites should not be used to abuse, ridicule, bully, harass, intimidate staff, volunteers, members or supporters, children or young people or stakeholders e.g. defamatory, threatening, harmful, homophobic or obscene comments. The privacy and feelings of others should be respected at all times.

**Contacting children and young people:** Under no circumstances should social or business networking sites be used inappropriately by you to contact children, young people or any of our members.

**Illegal file sharing:** Sites should not be used by you for accessing or sharing illegal or inappropriate content at any time.

**Values:** Under no circumstances should members of staff make any comments or post items, photos or materials that compromise Bright Path Mediation values.

**Disclaimer:** Any personal blogs and other personal posts by you, ***whereby you identify yourself in any way as a Bright Path Mediation employee or volunteer***, must contain a disclaimer stating *“the opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of Bright Path Mediation.”*

Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.

**Privacy:** You must consider carefully your privacy settings, and that initially private postings may not remain so.

**Offensive Material:** You must not access pornographic, sexually explicit, religious hatred, any material which may be construed as discriminatory or other unsuitable material, or download such material onto Bright Path Mediation

IT and other equipment, or in any way associate Bright Path Mediation with such material. Any breach of this policy or misuse of social networking sites or the internet may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. You may be required to remove or be refused access to any social media that Bright Path Mediation consider to constitute a breach of this policy.

***If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from posting it until you have discussed it with your line manager. If you see social media content that disparages us or reflects poorly on us, you should contact your manager.***

If you wish to report any suspected wrongdoing in relation to a suspected breach of this policy, please refer to Bright Path Mediation Whistle blowing Policy.

## **Monitoring**

This policy is designed to reduce risks to both Bright Path Mediation activities and reputation that might occur as a result of inappropriate use of social or business networking sites and personal blogs. Users must be aware that the use of Bright Path Mediation IT systems, including the internet and email, can be monitored and electronically logged. Monitoring is performed in accordance with the **Employment Practices Data Protection Code, Part 3: Monitoring at Work**, as issued by the Information Commissioner.

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including, but not limited to, social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems.



Trustee/Director signature:

Date 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Trustee/Director signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Review: 2025