Emil Dale
ACADEMY

Student Social Media Policy

Contents

1.Introduction.....3

Location of Policy.....3

To whom and where this policy applies.....3

2.Policy Aims.....4

3. Definitions.....6

Social Media.....6

4. Policy.....7

Student responsibilities.....7

Behaviour and conduct on social media.....8

Cyber-bullying.....9

Student's use of official EDA accounts.....9

Following staff on social media.....10

Breach of this Policy.....10

5. Policy Monitoring 1. EDA will:.....11

6. Freedom of speech.....12

ANNEX 1 - Guidance for students on safe and acceptable use of social media.....13

1.Introduction

1. In this policy, the abbreviation of EDA will be used to cover all aspects of the Emil Dale Academy business that is affiliated with the full-time courses in any capacity.

2. This policy aims to instill appropriate use of social media in EDA students, when their social media is connected – or linked in some way – to their status as an enrolled student at EDA, or when directly or indirectly referencing EDA in any way.

Location of Policy

3. This policy is available to access on EDA's website: EDA - Emil Dale's Performing Arts Academy - Policies

To whom and where this policy applies

4. This policy applies to all students enrolled on a full-time course at EDA.

5. This policy applies to social media communications made both on public and private forums by students including those communications which directly or indirectly reference EDA. This policy applies to social media from anywhere including off-site and on personal devices whether to an individual, group or the world.

6. EDA cannot regulate or be held accountable for views shared on social media or communicated by students or staff when they are done so on personal accounts not related to EDA other than the fact that they are a student or staff member of EDA. This includes any messages, statements or communications in groups not specifically set up and monitored by EDA.

7. EDA cannot reasonably regulate or discipline students where incidents or issues occur outside of college hours or during school holidays where the only link to EDA is the fact that the people involved are EDA students/ stakeholders.

2.Policy Aims

1. EDA recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities that social media presents. We actively use social media to engage with students and the general public, to celebrate success, communicate research and enhance EDA's profile online. Therefore, EDA actively encourages students to make effective and appropriate use of social media channels and to use them to engage in positive conversations with the EDA community.

2. Despite the opportunities presented by social media, there are risks. Social media allows individuals to communicate either in their name or anonymously with a potentially huge audience, and sometimes its informality can encourage us to be less cautious than we would be using other more traditional methods of communication and interaction.

3. Inappropriate use of social media can be damaging to the reputation of EDA as well as have a negative impact on staff and students.

4. This policy is intended to provide guidance for students on acceptable and safe use of social media platforms. The policy intends to help students manage their professional reputation and ensure they follow EDA's guidelines and the law.

5. While posts added to public forums can be seen by any member of the public from the date of publication, students are asked to remember that posts added to private forums can also be shared publicly by others. Students may be subjected to disciplinary action where they have been careless or reckless in the communication they have posted, even when they believe the forum to be private.

6. There have been a number of high-profile cases in recent years where students across the country have been disciplined after offensive comments, made on private messaging services such as WhatsApp, were captured and subsequently shared.

7. With this in mind, students should remember that action can be taken by EDA if behaviour failing to meet policy guidelines is identified either publicly or privately.

8. The principles of freedom of expression and academic freedom apply to the use of social media; however, EDA requires responsible and legal use.

9. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression within the law. EDA will always work to widen debate and challenge, rather than narrow it.

10. Peaceful protest is a protected form of expression; however, protest should not be allowed to shut down debate or infringe the rights of others.

11. Freedom of expression should not be abused for the purpose of unchallenged hatred or bigotry. EDA will always aim to encourage balanced and respectful debate.

3. Definitions

Social Media

1. ‘Social Media’ is used to describe virtual channels dedicated to live streamed or scheduled uploads, community-based input, interactions, content sharing and collaboration through the building of virtual networks and communities. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation and wikis are among the different types of social media. It also includes any other means of communicating on the internet where members of the public (including staff or students) may reasonably access the communication.

2. They currently include, but are not limited to, Facebook (and Messenger), Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Allo, X, TikTok, LinkedIn, Reddit, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, and Google+.

4. Policy

1. EDA reserves the right to determine, at our discretion, whether contributions to our social media channels breach our guidelines. We reserve the right to hide or delete comments made on our channels, as well as block users who do not follow these guidelines.

2. We also reserve the right to send any comments we deem appropriate to law enforcement authorities for investigation as we feel necessary or is required by law.

3. We also reserve the right to report any content breaching these guidelines to the social media platform hosting the post.

Student responsibilities

4. Students are encouraged to be mindful of how their identity, statements or views appear online and are reminded that future employers and industry contacts may view social media profiles when recruiting to gain information about a candidate's character, personality or employability. Students should therefore be conscious of publishing both texts and digital posts that may hinder them, for whatever reason, in the future.

5. Students are encouraged to review their existing social media accounts and, where appropriate, to transition to a more professional appearance.

6. All students must read and act in accordance with the principles of these guidelines and, in addition, it is recommended that students read and act in accordance with the rules and guidelines set out by individual social media companies and providers.

7. Students should 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, ownership rights and control of the content may be released. For this reason, it is important to exercise caution in sharing all information, especially where the information, expressly or by implication or innuendo, identifies a third party.

8. Students must be aware of the potential impact and permanence of anything posted online. Therefore, students should avoid posting anything that they do not wish to be in the public domain or that contravenes this policy.

9. Any digital material posted online could reach a wider audience than was expected or intended. Once digital content has been created and shared, there is limited control over its permanence and audience.

10. Please note that it is **not** acceptable for any students to post any EDA class/show/general content onto their own social media channels, unless if they are sharing a post that either EDA, The Factory Playhouse, Dale Hammond Associates, or Emil Dale Part-Time have already posted onto their public social media accounts.

Behaviour and conduct on social media

11. 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.

12. Students as users of social media may witness other members of society increasingly using social media for raising complaints and grievances. However, any students wishing to raise a complaint, report a crime or an incident should do so via established channels, e.g. Student Complaints Policy & Procedure, or by contacting the Police; they should not raise complaints or air grievances via social media. This is the fastest way to get a response and resolution to your problem. Students should contact the university and/or the Police as soon as possible, saving any evidence, e.g. screenshots of social media.

13. This policy is applicable and binding when a student graduates/ leaves EDA and is no longer a student. Any grievances or complaints must be raised directly to EDA through appropriate channels - EDA reserves the right to have anything posted on social media removed until it is fully investigated.

14. Remember that by airing any grievance or complaint publicly, it may limit any action that can be taken and can lead to civil action against the author if the complaint is found to be false.

15. 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 judgements about other students, staff or third parties.

16. We recommend that permission to share third party material, including all images, photography, text and videos, should be sought and recorded in a tangible format before uploading them to or linking them via social media. Furthermore, where permission is obtained, we recommend such materials should be credited appropriately. The following non-exhaustive list is considered to be of an unacceptable nature and should never be posted:

    a. Confidential information (which may include research not yet in the public domain, information about fellow students or staff or personal matters, non-public or not yet approved documents or information)
    b. Details of complaints/potential complaints and/or legal proceedings/potential legal proceedings involving EDA
    c. Personal information about another individual, including contact information, without their express permission
    d. Comments posted using fake accounts, made-up names or using another person's name without their consent
    e. Inappropriate material, including but not limited to images, that is, or may be perceived to be threatening, harassing, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, indecent, defamatory, or hostile towards any individual, group or entity
    f. Any other posting that constitutes, or may constitute, a criminal offence
    g. Anything which may bring EDA into disrepute or compromise the safety or reputation of colleagues, former colleagues, students, staff and those connected with EDA.

17. Students should be mindful that statements on social media that cause harm to an individual, including to their reputation, or that interfere with an ongoing disciplinary/legal process may create a potential claim

against the individual making the statement. Furthermore, this may extend to the sharing of statements made by others.

18. Students must respect copyright and intellectual property rights when posting content online. Uploading, sharing, or distributing materials owned by others without permission may constitute copyright infringement and could result in disciplinary or legal action.

19. Students should also be aware that communications on social media are also subject to legislation, which aim to prevent interference with legal proceedings regardless of intent to do so.

20. An individual, including the complainant, may undermine proceedings or processes by publishing information, including imagery, relating to existing or potential complaints and/or legal proceedings. This may be done in the heat of the moment; however, students should be aware that by doing so they might bring EDA into disrepute or compromise the safety of EDA's community. As such, this conduct may be seen to be of an unacceptable nature.

21. Students, and student groups must take particular care not to state or imply that their views are those of EDA when using social media, nor use EDA's logo at any time.

Cyber-bullying

22. EDA will not accept any form of bullying or harassment, and if students are found to be in breach of the Anti-bullying policy, disciplinary procedures will be followed.

23. The following non-exhaustive list of examples illustrate the types of behaviour, displayed through social media, which EDA considers to be forms of cyber bullying:

    a. Maliciously, negligently or recklessly spreading rumours, lies or gossip
    b. Intimidating or aggressive behaviour, as perceived by those viewing the social media
    c. Offensive or threatening comments or content, as perceived by those viewing the social media
    d. Posting comments/photos etc. deliberately, negligently or recklessly mocking an individual with the potential to harass or humiliate them, as perceived by those viewing the social media.

24. Cyber bullying may also take place via other means of electronic communication such as email, text, instant message, video, audio or images – edited or otherwise.

Student's use of official EDA accounts

25. Some students may contribute to the EDA's official social media activities as part of their role, for example taking over the Instagram accounts, vlogging, writing blogs or running an official X account. Students should be aware that while contributing to EDA's social media activities they are representing EDA.

26. By engaging with EDA's social media channels, you agree to follow these guidelines:
    Comments must not:

a. Contain spam, be defamatory of any person, deceive others, contain profanity, be obscene, offensive, threatening, abusive, hateful, inflammatory or promote sexually explicit material or violence.
    a. Promote discrimination based on race, sex, religion or belief, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or any of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
    b. Breach any of the terms of any of the social media platforms themselves.
    c. Be off-topic, irrelevant, unintelligible, repetitive or so frequent that they could be perceived as spam
    d. Contain any advertising or promote any services.

27. Misuse of official EDA accounts may lead to suspension and, following a disciplinary committee, may lead to expulsion; students will not be eligible for readmission to EDA at any time in the future (see Disciplinary Policy & Procedure).

Following staff on social media

28. Students should not be "friends" or follow any regularly teaching freelancers, administrative staff members, or senior management members on social media. All regularly teaching freelancers, administrative staff and senior management staff reserve their right to remove any EDA students from their "friend"/ "follower" list.

29. Students should only contact EDA staff members through their EDA email addresses or posts on EDA's Microsoft Teams. If a staff member – such as a guest teacher - does not have an EDA email address or an EDA Microsoft Teams account, all communication should go through the student's course leader.

Breach of this Policy

30. If a student is found to have acted in breach of this policy this may lead to consideration of disciplinary action being taken against them in accordance with EDA's Sixth Form Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or Degree and Gap Year Code of Conduct (course dependent).

31. Any individual suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with any investigation in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedure. Non-cooperation may lead to further disciplinary action.

32. Any individual may be required to remove internet or social media posts that are found by EDA to be in breach of the policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in further discipline or potential legal action.
    Any breach of this policy must be reported in line with EDA's Student Complaints Policy. In the first instance, any breaches must be brought to the attention of the office by emailing info@emildale.co.uk

5. Policy Monitoring

1. EDA will:

    a. Ensure this policy, and any changes, is accessible on the EDA website.
    b. On occasion, provide guidance for students on how to stay safe online when using social media.
    c. Monitor references to EDA on social media and the internet and respond to complaints regarding student conduct on social media.
    d. Take disciplinary action where inappropriate behaviour is exhibited that affects EDA.
    e. Annually review and update this policy, where appropriate, and any other associated policy and guidelines and publish details of any changes.

Data Protection

2. EDA will carry out any monitoring or processing of personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
3. Monitoring will only involve information that is publicly available or voluntarily reported to EDA. Any investigation or disciplinary process involving personal data will be handled confidentially and proportionately.
4. Students have the right to access their personal data and to request correction or deletion of inaccurate information.

6. Freedom of speech

1. Freedom of speech is fundamental to EDA as a Higher Education provider. The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires EDA to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech, within the law, is secured for its employees, students and visiting speakers. All staff and students through their membership are expected to tolerate and protect the expression of opinions, within the law.

Whilst the law promotes and protects freedom of speech, it also places limits on those freedoms in order to maintain public order and safety. EDA acknowledges that it has a legal responsibility to create a balance between minimising the possibility that extremism or unlawful conduct will arise on site at EDA and ensuring that it meets its legal obligations in relation to securing freedom of speech.

This policy takes account of (amongst other matters) the regulations and guidance specified in the Human Rights Act 1998 (Article 10); Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Page 3 of 7 Act 1986 ; Education Reform Act 1988 ; Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015; Equality Act 2010 ; Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

EDA recognises that “everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This means everyone has the right to express lawful views and opinions freely, in speech or in writing, without interference from the state or other bodies carrying out public functions, including most higher education providers. This is true even when these views or opinions may ‘offend, shock or disturb’ others”.
However, EDA recognises that, in the interests of the whole learning community, this must exist within formal guidelines.

ANNEX 1 - Guidance for students on safe and acceptable use of social media

2. Tips and hints on staying safe and managing your reputation online.

3. We all recognise the enormous benefits and opportunities that social media presents and we actively encourage our students to use social media to communicate and keep in touch with latest news and research in their area.

4. Despite the opportunities, there are risks. Social media allows individuals to communicate with a potentially large audience, and sometimes its informality can encourage us to be less cautious than we would ordinarily be.

5. These tips are to help you when you are considering posting on social media. They will help you manage your professional reputation and ensure you follow university guidelines and the law.

    a. Remember, everything you post online is public. Once it's out there you lose control of how others might interact with it. Posting anything online (even on closed profiles or private messaging services, like WhatsApp, for example) has the potential to become public, even without your knowledge or consent.
    b. Think before you post. Would you be happy for your family, lecturer or future employer to see it? If not, then it's probably not a good idea to post it. There have been a number of high profile cases where students across the country have been disciplined after offensive comments made on private messaging services, like WhatsApp, were captured and subsequently shared.
    c. Consider how the content of your messages may appear to others. Offensive materials, including text, images and video, have the potential to cause serious upset and severely damage your professional and personal reputation. Consider how others may perceive your content. How could a potential employer view the content? Employers are
    d. increasingly checking the digital footprint of potential staff. This means looking at old tweets, posts and comments on forums. Will sharing the content result in you falling short of expected standards at EDA and the law? If so, it could result in EDA taking disciplinary action.
    e. Don't forget, it can be hard to take something back once it has been shared, copied, or redistributed.
    f. Check your privacy settings. Protect your personal information and that of others that could be misused. Think about who can see your address, telephone number, date of birth and email address. And, definitely don't share your bank details online. Also remember that while you may be sharing the content privately (on your own private profile or in a private forum) others can share that content publicly if it is available.
    g. Use Secure Passwords. Remember to use a secure password and current advice for this is to use a pass phrase of three or more words that you can picture in your head. Never reuse passwords across different websites. Where possible use second factor authentication methods, which may include sites sending an SMS or an authenticator app on your phone.
    h. Make sure you familiarise yourself with expectations regarding professionalism and confidentiality on your course, especially if your course is accredited by a professional body. If you breach the code of conduct of a professional body, it is very likely to affect your ability to study and your future career.

i. Be aware of sharing third-party materials. Do you need permission to share the materials or should you, as a matter of courtesy, contact the party? Make sure you check before posting as infringement of rules could break copyright and/or intellectual property laws.
j. Finally, question everything you read online. Not everything you read might be completely accurate. Who wrote it? Where did it come from? Does the imagery look like poor quality? If you think it looks or sounds inaccurate, it's probably best avoided. Writing and distributing inaccurate statements about people and organisations can be unlawful and lead to legal action.

Version Number	**Date of Issue**	**Review Date**	**Author**	**Changes Made/ detail**
1	11th August 2020	July 2021	Sarah Moore	First issue
2	12th November 2021	July 2022	Eden Tinsey	Addition of TikTok in Section 3
3	29th July 2022	July 2023	Eden Tinsey	Annual policy review
4	10th August 2023	July 2024	Eden Tinsey	Annual policy review
5	1st October 2024	October 2025	Eden Tinsey	Change of Twitter to X
6	21st October 2025	October 2026	Sophie Canny	Annual policy review. Update of template. Addition of Section 4, Paragraph 18 to note compliance with IP law. Addition of 'Data Protection' in Section 5 to confirm compliance with UK data protection law.