



QRS Social Media Policy

Purpose and Scope

For the purposes of this policy, social media is any type of online media that allows discussion and interaction as opposed to broadcast only.

There are several types of social media and this policy covers all types, for example:

- Social networking (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+).
- Microblogging (Twitter, Tumblr).
- Photo sharing (Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest).
- Video sharing (YouTube, Facebook Live, Periscope, Vimeo)

The above list is not exhaustive. This policy also covers private messages sent over online channels such as direct messaging via Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

It applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, during working hours and in your own time to the extent that it may affect the business of the Company. The policy applies both when the social media is accessed using our Information Systems and also when accessed using equipment or software belonging to employees or others.

Whilst we recognise the benefits which may be gained from appropriate use of social media, it is also important to be aware that it poses significant risks to our business. These risks include disclosure of confidential information and intellectual property, damage to our reputation and the risk of legal claims. To minimise these risks this policy sets out the rules applying to the use of social media.

This policy covers all employees, casual and agency staff. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and potential legal action. Any misuse of social media should be reported to your line manager or HR Director in the first instance.

Responsible use of social media

You must not use social media in a way that might breach any of our policies, any express or implied contractual obligations, legislation, or regulatory requirements. Use of social media must comply with all relevant policies including but not limited to:

- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Use of Company Facilities Policy
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Data Protection Act 1998

In your use of social media, you must not:

- Make disparaging or defamatory statements about QRS, our employees, clients or suppliers.
- Harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate in any way.
- Use data obtained in the course of your employment with QRS in any way which breaches confidentiality / the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Breach copyright belonging to QRS.
- Disclose any intellectual property, confidential or commercially sensitive information relating to our business.
- Make statements which cause, or may cause, harm to our reputation or otherwise be prejudicial to our business interests.
- QRS discourages employees from posting online anonymously or using pseudonyms. You should never impersonate another individual.

You are personally responsible for what you communicate in social media. Often materials published will be widely accessible by the public and will remain accessible for a long time. If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, you should discuss it with your line manager before making the post.

What happens if it goes wrong?

You should always show respect to others when using social media and ensure that your actions do not have a negative impact on QRS's reputation or those connected with the business. Mistakes happen – if you post something you didn't mean to, or get a message or response wrong, tell your line manager immediately in order that remedial action can be taken to minimise embarrassment / reputational damage.

Anyone who feels that they have been subject to cyber-bullying or offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague through any digital communication network should inform their line manager who will take advice from HR and investigate the matter as appropriate. QRS regards cyber-bullying as seriously as any other form of bullying or harassment. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated and will be regarded as misconduct that could lead to formal action, including dismissal in serious cases, under QRS's Disciplinary Procedure

Principles

- Where appropriate, QRS reserves the right to monitor use of social media platforms and take appropriate action to protect against any misuse that may be harmful to the company.
- If an employee's / casual workers use of social media is considered to be derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, creating legal liability for QRS, bringing the company into disrepute, breaching the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy or any other QRS policy or procedure then QRS may take action under the disciplinary procedure. This may include comments, videos, or photographs, which have been posted on social media sites about the company, work colleagues or managers. *Depending on the seriousness, legal action may also be sought.*
- An employee / casual worker should not engage in illegal activity through social media or engage in any activity that promotes terrorism. The very fact of possessing or disseminating terrorist material may be sufficient to warrant an investigation by the police.
- QRS's response to any misuse of social media in a personal capacity will be reasonable and proportionate to the perceived offence; the nature of the postings/comments made and the impact or potential impact on the company / persons connected with the company.
- Social networking sites may be referred to when investigating possible misconduct/gross misconduct.
- Employees / casual workers should be aware of security threats and be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks can also be used to distribute spam and malware.
- QRS may require employees to remove social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of these standards and failure to comply with such a request may result in disciplinary action / legal action.

Defamation / Libel / Slander

If serious defamatory remarks are made about the company, regardless of whether the person is connected to the business or not, QRS reserve the right to seek legal action in accordance with the Defamation Act 2013.

These policies supplement your terms of employment but are not of contractual effect. Their purpose is to explain the Company's current policies and procedures but they may be subject to change without notice if changes are considered appropriate by the Company or if there are changes in relevant legislation.