

# ITALIA CONTI

## Social Media Policy

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Prepared by	Head of Quality Assurance
Reviewed	Policy Steering Group
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The Policy Steering Group and Board will review this policy every two years, and additionally where there are relevant legal or operational changes, or where issues arising from its operation indicate a need for earlier review

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Italia Conti embraces the benefits and opportunities of using Social Media as a tool for communication. Social media allows our staff and students to engage with the wider Italia Conti community and the general public, to celebrate success and to raise our online profile. We also recognise that Social Media offers numerous opportunities for personal networking and promotion, particularly where Italia Conti invite guest practitioners who are active in the industry to direct or choreograph productions, deliver professional preparation classes or guest workshops. Effective use of Social Media has become a vital part of the skills set required by creative and performing arts professionals and Italia Conti would not wish to unreasonably stymie this, recognising the benefit to both students and the institution.
- 1.2 Along with the many benefits of Social Media, however, there are also risks which staff and students need to be aware of. Social Media can be used to post ideas anonymously, and its very spontaneity and topical nature (which is one of its most attractive features), can sometimes encourage users to adopt a less cautious approach when expressing their thoughts or reactions to the wider world. This can lead to Social Media posts which can have a negative impact on Social Media user themselves or can cause reputational damage to staff or fellow professionals, or even to the institution itself. Additionally, once a Social Media post has been made, it is often available for many years and can give an incorrect impression that can affect an individual's reputation and employability.
- 1.3 This policy has been designed to support staff and students in their use of social media. It provides clear guidance which will help to ensure that staff and students can enjoy the benefits of Social Media in a safe and responsible way.
- 1.4 The policy aims to:
  - minimise any unwarranted risks to Italia Conti using Social Media;
  - ensure that the use of Social Media is responsibly undertaken;
  - ensure consistent standards in Social Media use;
  - ensure that the confidentiality of students, employees and stakeholders, and the reputation of Italia Conti, are safeguarded;
  - to make staff and students aware of the potential impact social media could have on themselves, Italia Conti and others; and
  - to provide guidance on etiquette and best practice when using social media platforms.

## 2. Scope / definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, "Italia Conti" refers to the Italia Conti Arts Centre, Italia Conti Associate Schools and Companies.
- 2.2 This policy applies to
  - current staff whose Social Media use either includes reference to their status as an Italia Conti employee, and/or who reference (either directly or indirectly) Italia Conti in their communications.
  - all students of Italia Conti who engage share content in the context of a social

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network or engage in conversations through the use of social media. It extends to the use of social media in a personal capacity, where this impact Italia Conti, its students, staff, or the wider community.

- 2.3 For the purposes of this policy, Staff includes those who are staff members employed directly by Italia Conti; it also includes those who are providing services on a contracted or freelance basis, visiting professionals, or external contractors who provide services on behalf of Italia Conti. It also applies to trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work or provide services on behalf of Italia Conti, Associate Schools & Companies.
- 2.4 For the purpose of this policy, Students includes all students enrolled at Italia Conti, including those in Associate Schools, short courses and Emerging Talent courses, and applicants to the institution.
- 2.5 For the purpose of this policy, the term 'Social Media' is used to describe methods of electronic communication that allow comments and content to be shared with others (an 'audience'). This audience can either be 'public' (anyone who can access the Social Media application or website) or can be a 'private', (only those with special permission or logins can view the material). Social Media usually allows its users to interact and chat in an informal and topical manner. Most Social Media platforms offer almost instantaneous and ephemeral communication, (although much of the content can be accessed at a later date and may never be deleted).
- 2.6 Social media applications often have online discussion forums, chatrooms, media posting sites, blogs and other types of online social spaces. It includes (but is not limited to) applications such as Facebook™, Flickr™, Instagram™, LinkedIn™, Pinterest™, Snapchat™, X™ (formerly Twitter), BlueSky™ Wechat™, and WhatsApp™. This policy's definition of social media also covers web-based services, for example, blogs, video, and image-sharing websites such as Flickr™, Tik-Tok™, OnlyFans™ and YouTube. The use of technology such as mobile phones, cameras, smart- watches or other handheld devices is also covered by this policy. This list is not exhaustive as this policy will also relate to other emerging forms of technology used for communicating via social media. This policy applies to all social media use whether or not expressly listed in this paragraph.
- 2.7 It also extends to the use of the chat function in all conferencing software, whether these are used in a scheduled teaching and learning session or for communication between Students when collaborating at other times. The recording function in MS Teams means that the contents of a 'chat' remain available after the session has closed for all participants to view.
- 2.8 Italia Conti values academic freedom (i.e., the freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without risk to employment or privileges) and this must be taken into account when applying this policy.
- 2.9 This policy applies to Social Media uploaded from any geographic location, both on and outside Italia Conti owned or controlled premises, and to communications sent on devices to an individual, group or the wider world. It is intended to guide current employees and Students in the use of Social Media where they make reference to Italia Conti and its Staff and Students.
- 2.10 **The use, creation or recreation of Italia Conti logos, crests, typefaces or brands**

**on any personal web space or on any online, or offline medium without prior consent is prohibited.** These are registered trademarks, patents and remain the intellectual property of Italia Conti: use of these elements is an infringement of copyright.

## 3. Legal Framework

- 3.1 Italia Conti is committed to ensuring that all Staff and Students use Social Media in a responsible way which ensures that they do not breach any relevant laws or obligations. Inappropriate disclosure of confidential information is likely to breach:
- The Human Rights Act 1998
  - The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality
  - Data Protection Act 2018
  - Employment Rights Act 1996
  - Professional Codes of Conduct
  - Online Safety Act 2023
- 3.2 All Italia Conti Staff and Students should be aware that the content they share through social networking applications, even if they are on 'private' spaces, may still be subject to a variety of criminal and civil laws. These can include law relating to copyright, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment, freedom of information, protection of adults and young people, e.g., Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. All users must also operate in line with the Italia Conti's *Equal Opportunities* Policy.
- 3.3 Italia Conti abides by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2025 and values academic freedom, and this must be considered when applying this policy. This gives Staff and Students freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without risk to employment or privileges.

## 4. Principles

- 4.1 If Staff or Students use social media in a professional capacity, either through an Italia Conti or through a Professional Personal Account, they must make sure that their communications do not:
- **bring Italia Conti into disrepute**, for example, by making defamatory or disparaging comments about individuals, other organisations or groups, or Italia Conti, or by posting inappropriate content or using inappropriate language;
  - **breach confidentiality or data protection requirements**, for example, revealing confidential information owned by Italia Conti, or the personal data of any individual who has not given appropriate consent for their data to be published;
  - **breach copyright or other intellectual property rights**, for example, using someone else's content without their permission or by breaking the terms of any permission granted;
  - **do anything that may be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual or group**, for example, making offensive

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or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief or age; using social media to bully another individual; or posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or linking to such content; or

- **breach Italia Conti's policies or the terms of service of the social network;**
- **go against our duty of care to our Students and other members of Staff or the wider Italia Conti community, for example crossing the line between an appropriate Student and member of Staff contact.**

4.2 Italia Conti encourages Staff and Students to use Social Media in a responsible and respectful way; it can be used by Staff and Students to celebrate achievement, to support their peers, and to express well-considered and truthful opinions.

## 4.3 Staff

In using Social Media, Italia Conti **asks Staff to**

- respect the rights and opinions of others, their privacy and not to disclose confidential, sensitive or privileged information that may breach any legal or common law obligations;
- remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web-based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.
- adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have;
- exercise care when using dating and social media websites where Staff could encounter Students;
- not make contact with Students, their guardians or family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow Students' or their guardians' accounts on any social media platform;
- not connect with or correspond with Students personally via social media or other methods of communication until at least 6 months after the end of academic year of the Student's graduating year (even if the Student in question has left early).

4.4 Staff are expected to use Social Media in a way that does not contravene any existing Italia Conti policy or the terms and conditions of their terms of employment.

4.5 Staff can follow and communicate openly on Student run pages i.e. Football team, grad pages but they mustn't DM Students etc.

4.6 Staff must use Social Media in accordance with any existing legislation or common law requirements, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of their Social Media provider.

4.7 All Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate. This policy applies to personal use of Social Media as well as the use of Social Media for official Italia Conti purposes, and includes websites hosted and maintained on behalf of the Italia Conti Associate Schools and Companies.

4.8 Staff are held personally responsible for any material they upload and should their

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Social Media posts infringe any existing Italia Conti policies, they may be subject to disciplinary measures.

- 4.9 Staff must not represent their personal opinions as being those of Italia Conti; Italia Conti has its own Social Media channels for this purpose.
- 4.10 Staff should not use Social Media for airing grievances or reporting crimes. There are existing channels for dealing with these issues, e.g., the Grievance Policy and Procedure in the Staff Handbook and Italia Conti's *Complaints Policy & Procedures*. Note: Staff reporting such incidents via Social Media might compromise any subsequent court case.
- 4.11 Whilst Italia Conti recognises the right of Staff to voice their honest opinion in Social Media posts, users should not use Social Media and the internet to purposefully attack, insult, abuse or defame others. False or malicious allegations can lead to legal action brought by others.
- 4.12 Italia Conti may take disciplinary action where users have been reckless or careless in their Social Media communication.
- 4.13 Italia Conti may require users to remove Social Media/Internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action or civil action.
- 4.14 This policy is not intended to affect the ability of the Italia Conti community to use relevant Social Media for purely professional purposes.

## 4.15 **Students**

In using Social Media, Italia Conti asks **Students** to

- respect the rights and opinions of others, their privacy and not to disclose confidential, sensitive or privileged information that may breach any legal or common law obligations;
  - remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web-based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.
  - adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have;
  - exercise care when using dating and social media websites where Students could encounter Staff;
  - not make contact with Staff, or family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow Staff on any social media platform;
  - not connect with or correspond with Staff personally via social media or other methods of communication until at least 6 months after the end of academic year of the Student's graduating year (even if the Student in question has left early).
- 4.16 Students are expected to use Social Media in a way that does not contravene any existing Italia Conti policy or the terms and conditions of their terms of registration.
- 4.17 Students can follow and communicate openly on Student run pages i.e. Football

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team, grad pages but they mustn't DM Staff etc.

- 4.18 Students must use Social Media in accordance with any existing legislation or common law requirements, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of their Social Media provider.
- 4.19 All Students must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate. This policy applies to personal use of Social Media as well as the use of Social Media for appropriate professional Italia Conti purposes, and includes websites hosted and maintained on behalf of the Italia Conti Associate Schools and Companies.
- 4.20 Students are held personally responsible for any material they upload and should their Social Media posts infringe any existing Italia Conti policies, they may be subject to disciplinary measures.
- 4.21 Students must not represent their personal opinions as being those of Italia Conti; Italia Conti has its own Social Media channels for this purpose.
- 4.22 Students should not use Social Media for airing grievances or reporting crimes. There are existing channels for dealing with these issues, e.g., the *Disciplinary Policy and Procedure* and Italia Conti's *Complaints Policy & Procedures*. Note: Students reporting such incidents via Social Media might compromise any subsequent court case.
- 4.23 Whilst Italia Conti recognises the right of Students to voice their honest opinion in Social Media posts, users should not use Social Media and the internet to purposefully attack, insult, abuse or defame others. False or malicious allegations can lead to legal action brought by others.
- 4.24 Italia Conti may take disciplinary action where users have been reckless or careless in their Social Media communication.
- 4.25 Italia Conti may require users to remove Social Media/Internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action or civil action.
- 4.26 This policy is not intended to affect the ability of the Italia Conti community to use relevant Social Media for purely professional purposes.

## 5. Personal Use of Social Media

- 5.1 Italia Conti encourages Staff and Students to use Social Media to connect with their family, friends, and the wider community. Staff are free to share Italia Conti official posts or media that they have recorded in public spaces which are free from any copyright, safeguarding/welfare, confidentiality or licensing restrictions.
- 5.2 Staff and Students are reminded that they can only connect directly with their Students through their official Italia Conti email accounts. For safeguarding/welfare purposes, Staff are prohibited from contacting Students through their personal social media or email accounts. (The only exception would be where the Student concerned was also a family member). Any requests that Staff receive from Students should be declined so that communication, including the potential for any direct

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messaging, remains within established Italia Conti channels (Italia Conti e-mail being the preferred option for this).

- 5.3 This policy is intended to cover the use of all and any social media platforms used by Staff and Students of Italia Conti. For the purpose of this Policy, we split social media accounts into three distinct types of social media account, and that their social media policy covers all three areas:
- 5.3.1 Official Italia Conti accounts - used by representatives of the Italia Conti community to communicate messages from a course, departmental or corporate perspective; (e.g. Italia Conti and UEL / UoC accounts)
  - 5.3.2 Professional Personal Account – used by an individual member of Staff or Student for professional purposes, who is identifiable as an employee / Student of the Italia Conti or their respective university through the content of their posts or their profile’s biographical information; and
  - 5.3.3 Private Personal Account – used by an individual primarily for non – Italia Conti or university activity.
- 5.4 In the event that Staff receive a request from a Student on social media, the established course of action is to decline and should the member of Staff wish, follow up with an e-mail on Italia Conti e-mail to inform the Student that they are prohibited from connecting with current Students on social media and to refer them to this policy. The same procedures applies between Students and Staff.
- 5.5 In the event that direct contact with an Italia Conti Student is made inadvertently through Social Media (i.e. – through a dating website or app), this should be disclosed immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This is also reflected in the corresponding Student policies, emphasising that it is a responsibility also shared by Students to make a disclosure.
- 5.6 The professional appearance (or otherwise) of Social Media accounts and their posts may sometimes be reviewed by prospective employers, Students or other contacts in the industry. This research could be used to infer a user’s personality or employability.
- 5.7 Information that Staff or Students gain in the course of their involvement with Italia Conti, must not be used for unfair personal gain nor passed on to others who may use it in the same way. Staff are reminded that they have a duty of confidentiality which is written into their contract of employment.
- 5.8 Staff, Students and the wider Italia Conti community should not create or post images or videos from Italia Conti activities or of Italia Conti Staff or Students without permission. This applies to activities which take place on private premises which Italia Conti control or have authority over, e.g. classes, rehearsals, and performances and extends to instances where Staff might encounter Students outside of Italia Conti (i.e. – if teaching classes at external dance studios where Italia Conti Students may be in attendance). The publication of such material may be an infringement of copyright laws. Images taken at Italia Conti events, when such permission has been granted by Italia Conti are for the sole and private use of that individual and their use must be in accordance with any terms and conditions imposed by Italia Conti at the time.

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- 5.9 Staff and Students should seek the permission of the copyright holder before posting any material which might belong to others. This permission should be given in such a way that the Staff member can provide proof of permission should there be any query afterwards, e.g., in a written document or electronic communication. The copyright holder should always be acknowledged in the post.
- 5.10 Staff and Students should check the terms and conditions of any Social Media account they are signing up for. This is because users may lose legal control and/or ownership of any material that they might upload. This could lead to material being posted on other websites without the Staff member or Student's knowledge. This might lead to material reaching an unintended audience or be used in ways that the Staff member or Student did not expect.
- 5.11 If a Staff member or Student discloses an affiliation with Italia Conti on their profile or in any social media postings, they must state that their views do not necessarily represent those of Italia Conti. However, Staff and Students should be aware that they will still be perceived as a representative of Italia Conti, and such a disclaimer would not prevent appropriate disciplinary action.
- 5.12 Staff should not send "friend" requests to Students or their parents or close relatives or solicit connections with Students, their parents or close relatives on social media in any other way as this could be deemed to create a conflict of interest or call in to question their objectivity. This applies to personal and professional accounts. Where a Staff member is unsure whether it is appropriate to accept a friend request, they should consult with the HR department. Where a Student has left Italia Conti, a Staff member may accept a "friend" request or a request to follow a private account at the point at which the time elapsed since the Student's cohort's leaving Italia Conti exceeds 6 months from the date of the original intended completion date of their course and providing the Student is over the age of 18.
- 5.13 Students should not send "friend" requests to Staff or close relatives or solicit connections with Staff or their close relatives on social media in any other way as this could be deemed to create a conflict of interest or call in to question the objectivity of the member of Staff. This applies to personal and professional accounts. Where a Student is unsure whether it is appropriate to accept a friend request, they should consult with the Wellbeing team. Where a Student has left Italia Conti, a Student member may send or accept a "friend" request or a request to follow a private account at the point at which the time elapsed since the Student's leaving Italia Conti exceeds 6 months following the Student's cohort's expected course end date and providing the Student is over the age of 18.
- 5.14 Staff and Students should take care with the personal information they reveal on Social Media sites, so they do not inadvertently put themselves or others at risk. Staff and Student members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the privacy settings for each social media platform and share only at a level that they consider to be appropriate.
- 5.15 Further advice and guidance for Staff on managing and protecting their online reputation can be found in [Appendix 2](#).
- 5.16 Further advice and guidance for Students in managing best practice in setting up and developing a professional online presence can be found in the Student Guide in **Appendix 3**.

- 5.17 A checklist of examples of unacceptable use of Social Media can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

## 6. Official Italia Conti Social Media Accounts

- 6.1 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Marketing and IT Staff have full responsibility for running the Italia Conti's official website, and its Facebook™, Twitter™, Instagram™, and You Tube™ sites. No other Social Media platforms may be set up by any member of Staff or Student that can be associated and recognised as Italia Conti.

## 7. Social media in an emergency

- 7.1 Social media provides important information channels for Staff, Students and wider stakeholders during an emergency situation, and it is vital that the information provided is timely, consistent and accurate. All communications on social media from Italia Conti in an emergency situation will be issued via the central Italia Conti social media accounts. In order to minimise the risk of issuing conflicting and/or incorrect information, it is vital that all other social media accounts do not post information or updates during a live incident and await further direction from Italia Conti's Emergency Actions Response Team.

## 8. Escalating concerns and issues

- 8.1 Should a social media account appear to have been a victim of unauthorised access, or a post from a corporate or professional personal account attracts a number of negative comments, Staff and / or Students should flag this with SLT in a timely manner, who can record the incident and comments and advise on how best to respond. (Contact: [Speakup@italiaconti.co.uk](mailto:Speakup@italiaconti.co.uk)).
- 8.2 Where this could potentially result in a personal data breach this must also be reported to the DPO Offices in accordance with our breach management processes ([DPO@italiaconti.co.uk](mailto:DPO@italiaconti.co.uk)).

## 9. Monitoring of Internet Use

- 9.1 Italia Conti monitors usage of its Internet, online content, online services, and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.
- 9.2 Users of Italia Conti email and internet services should be aware that anything they create, store, send or receive using Italia Conti's ICT system may be monitored at any time.

## 10. Breaches of the Policy

- 10.1 Any breach of this policy that leads to a breach of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of Italia Conti or any acts that render Italia Conti liable to third parties may result in legal action, disciplinary action or sanctions in line with the published Italia Conti policies for Staff.
- 10.2 Italia Conti may ask users to remove Internet postings which are deemed to constitute

a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may, in itself, result in disciplinary action or civil action.

## 11. Relationship with other Italia Conti policies

11.1 If an internet post would breach any of Italia Conti's policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, users are prohibited from using Social Media to:

- breach the *Use of E-mail, Internet & Communication Systems* guidance contained within the Staff Handbook or Student Course Handbook
- breach Italia Conti's obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies
- breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality
- breach the Italia Conti *Code of Conduct and Disciplinary* policies or related rules, policies and procedures
- defame or disparage Italia Conti or affiliates, parents, Staff, Students, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders
- harass or bully other users in any way or breach the Italia Conti *Bullying & Harassment Policy*
- unlawfully discriminate against other users or third parties or breach the Italia Conti's *Equal Opportunities Policy*
- breach Italia Conti's *Data Protection Policy*
- breach any other laws, e.g., the use of Social Media in a false or misleading way, for example, by claiming to be someone else or by deliberately making misleading statements).
- Behaviour online is often permanently recorded and so users must be extra cautious as it may affect their future professional reputation.

11.2 Users must also be aware of the particular risks to internet security that Social Media presents and so to comply with Italia Conti's policies on internet security and digital safety and must take any extra measures necessary not to allow any of their actions on Social Media sites to create vulnerability to any Italia Conti systems.

## 12. Related Policies

- Student Guide to the Social Media Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Prevent Risk Assessment
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Charter
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy notices
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Codes of Practice
- Disciplinary Policy
- Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence Policy
- Personal Relationships Policy
- Extremism and Anti-Radicalisation Policy

All policies can be found on our website [here](#)

## **Appendix 1: Checklist of examples of unacceptable use of Social Media\***

- Personal contact information (without that individual's permission).
- Any material that could bring Italia Conti, its Staff (or former Staff), Students (or former Students), into disrepute, or compromise a safe study environment.
- Postings that constitute a criminal offence.
- Postings that constitute harassment, discrimination or bullying.\*\*
- Postings that contain privileged information, e.g., information about personal matters, surveys, or documents not yet approved for publication, etc.
- Postings created under fake identities, or which use the identity of others.
- Postings that imply that they are the opinion of Italia Conti.
- Postings that discuss complaints or criminal or civil proceedings involving Italia Conti.
- Postings that might constitute a contempt of court.
- Postings that imply that Italia Conti has endorsed a commercial product or service.
- Sharing statements that might relate to or compromise an ongoing disciplinary process.
- Postings that might interfere with ongoing legal proceedings.
- Postings that include the official Italia Conti logo.

*\*This list is not exhaustive.*

\*\* Examples of cyberbullying may include the use of Social Media to:

- spread rumour, innuendo, lies or gossip.
- spread aggressive, threatening or intimidating comments, or to incite others to take part in such behaviour.
- make offensive remarks or content about individuals or groups of individuals.
- mock individuals (whether by design or recklessly)

*This list is not exhaustive*

## Appendix 2: Good practice in Social Media use

Your professional reputation is part of your current and future career, therefore managing your online reputation is essential. Anything you post online or send by email is potentially public and permanent, even if you subsequently delete posts and emails and if you use privacy settings.

For reviewing the content of your Social Media posts, always consider:

- 1) The impression people will form of you.
  - Would you be happy for the message to be seen publicly?
- 2) The content of your message.
  - Does it show you as a professional practitioner?
  - What judgements might be made of your professionalism and potential employability?
- 3) The accuracy of your content?
  - Is it true?
  - Could it give rise to a civil claim or criminal liability?
- 4) The presentation of your content.
  - Does it look professional?
  - Is it appropriately worded?
- 5) Is your use of Social Media complying with current Italia Conti policies?
- 6) Does your use of Social Media comply with any professional codes of conduct that apply to you?
- 7) Are you revealing privileged or confidential information?
- 8) Are you complying with data protection law?
- 9) Are you blurring the line between your professional and personal life?
  - Is the way you are presenting yourself going to undermine your professional relationships with your Students?

### Check your privacy settings

When using social networking websites, it is important that you are in control of who can see your account details and content, including photos, albums, posts, status updates and any personal information. Accounts for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram can be set to private.

### Friend or Foe

It is a good idea to remove any friends, or customise the privacy settings for current friends, if access to your personal activity could compromise your position.

Be careful about comments you post on your friends' walls; if their profile is not set to private, your posts will be visible to everyone. Sharing content with others means that it is out of your control.

It is important, regardless of which setting you use, to assume that every post you make could be made public, as friends' settings do not guarantee privacy

## Using email

All emails sent from an Italia Conti account should be regarded as public, especially as a 'data subject access' request could be made under the Data Protection Act. Emails should always be in professional language and appropriate to being an employee. It should also be noted that where a private email account is used for issues associated with work, it has in some cases been deemed as a work account and therefore also subject to the rules of professional language and conduct.

In short, do not send an email that you would not be happy for your employer or a colleague to read.

For technical advice on safely using Social Media, use this link to the National Cyber Security Centre at: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/social-media-how-to-use-it-safely>

## Further References:

Association of Schools and College Leaders UK [www.ascl.org.uk](http://www.ascl.org.uk)

## Appendix 3: Student Guide to the Italia Conti Social Media Policy

### 1. Why this guide exists

Social media is an important part of modern creative and professional life. It can help you celebrate your work, support your peers, build your profile, connect with the wider industry and share positive moments from your training.

Italia Conti does not want to stop Students using social media well. In fact, the Social Media Policy recognises that effective social media use is part of the skillset needed by many creative and performing arts professionals.

However, social media also carries risks. Posts, comments, messages, photos, videos and group chats can affect:

- Your professional reputation;
- Someone else's privacy, safety or wellbeing;
- The reputation of another Student, tutor, member of Staff or visiting professional;
- The reputation of Italia Conti;
- Your future employability, representation or casting opportunities;
- Formal processes such as complaints, investigations or disciplinary matter.

This guide explains the key parts of the Social Media Policy in plain English. It does not replace the policy. The approved **Italia Conti Social Media Policy** remains the formal document.

### 2. The basic principle

Before you post, share, comment, like, repost, forward, screenshot, record or message, ask yourself:

**Would I be comfortable if this was seen by a tutor, future employer, agent, casting director, parent, Student, member of Staff or someone involved in a formal process?**

Even private accounts, close friends lists, disappearing posts and group chats are not fully private. Content can be screenshotted, forwarded, saved, reported or shared more widely than you intended.

The policy reminds Students to be mindful of their digital footprint and to use social media responsibly, respectfully and professionally.

### 3. What counts as social media?

For the purposes of the policy, social media is not just Instagram or Tiktok.

It includes, for example:

- Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, X, BlueSky, YouTube, LinkedIn and similar platforms;
- WhatsApp, Discord, Messenger and group chats;
- blogs, forums, comment sections and online communities;
- dating apps;
- livestreams and video-sharing platforms;
- Microsoft Teams chat, online learning chats and conferencing software;
- images, videos, recordings, screenshots, comments, likes, reposts and direct

messages.

The policy applies whether content is public, private, anonymous, temporary, deleted, archived, hidden or posted from outside Italia Conti.

## 4. The three types of account

The Social Media Policy refers to three types of account.

### Official Italia Conti accounts

These are accounts run by authorised people on behalf of Italia Conti. Students must not create accounts that look like official Italia Conti accounts unless they have permission.

### Professional personal accounts

These are accounts you use to present yourself professionally. For example, an account where you share performance work, headshots, showreels, training updates or industry-facing content, and where you are identifiable as connected to Italia Conti. This may also include accounts that are set up for Graduate Year Groups / Alumni pages.

### Private personal accounts

These are your personal accounts. Italia Conti does not seek to interfere with your private life. However, personal social media use can still fall within the policy if it affects Italia Conti, Staff, Students, the wider community, your professional relationships, or a safe and respectful learning environment.

## 5. Positive ways to use social media

Students are encouraged to use social media positively and professionally.

Good social media use might include:

- celebrating achievements, performances and milestones;
- sharing official Italia Conti posts;
- supporting classmates and creative projects;
- promoting your professional profile;
- engaging with industry in a respectful and thoughtful way;
- sharing approved content from events or performances;
- building a portfolio of work that reflects your skill, judgement and professionalism.

A good professional account does not need to be bland. It can have personality. The key is that it should not undermine your reputation, someone else's dignity, or Italia Conti's expectations of professional conduct.

## 6. Posting about Italia Conti

You may want to post about your training, performances, rehearsals, friends and experiences at Italia Conti. That is understandable, and positive posts can be a valuable part of community and professional life.

However, you must take particular care when posting anything connected to Italia Conti. You should not post or share:

- photos, videos or recordings from classes, rehearsals, tutorials, assessments or performances unless permission has been given;

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- footage of Staff, tutors, or visiting professionals;
- footage of other Students without permission;
- backstage, dressing room, studio, classroom or private-space content;
- scripts, choreography, music, rehearsal material, assessment content or production material;
- confidential information about Students, Staff, assessments, casting, complaints, disciplinary matters, welfare or safeguarding;
- content that implies you are speaking on behalf of Italia Conti;
- content using the Italia Conti logo, crest, branding or name in a way that suggests official approval without permission.

The policy is clear that Staff and Students should not create or post images or videos from Italia Conti activities, or of Italia Conti Staff or Students, without permission. This includes classes, rehearsals and performances.

## 7. Consent matters

Before posting anyone else, ask for permission.

This includes:

- photos;
- videos;
- audio recordings;
- screenshots;
- group chat content;
- direct messages;
- rehearsal footage;
- performance footage;
- behind-the-scenes content;
- personal information;
- jokes or captions that identify someone directly or indirectly.

Consent should be clear. Someone being present in a room, rehearsal or photograph does not automatically mean they have agreed to be posted online.

Be especially careful with content involving:

- Students under 18;
- visiting professionals;
- Staff;
- welfare or safeguarding matters;
- dressing rooms, changing areas, backstage spaces or private conversations;
- anything that could embarrass, expose, mock or misrepresent another person.

## 8. Staff and Student boundaries online

The Social Media Policy sets clear expectations around Staff and Student contact on social media.

**Students should not send friend requests, follow requests or direct personal social media contact to Staff or Staff relatives. Staff are also expected not to make personal social media contact with Students.**

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This applies to both personal and professional accounts.

If you are unsure whether a connection is appropriate, speak to the Wellbeing Team or an appropriate member of Staff before acting.

The policy allows for social media connections after the relevant period following the end of a Student's course, provided the Student is over 18 and the required time has passed. Until then, communication should remain through official Italia Conti channels.

## **9. Group chats and private messages still count**

A group chat can feel informal, but it is still part of your online conduct.

The same expectations apply to:

- WhatsApp groups;
- Discord servers;
- Instagram group chats;
- Teams chats;
- closed or invitation-only groups;
- anonymous or temporary accounts.

Do not use group chats or private messages to bully, humiliate, exclude, intimidate, threaten, spread rumours, share private information, mock someone, or circulate content without consent.

If something would be unacceptable in person, it is likely to be unacceptable online.

## **10. Complaints and concerns should use the proper routes**

Students are allowed to raise concerns. The policy does not stop Students from making a genuine complaint, reporting misconduct, seeking support, contacting the police, reporting harassment or sexual misconduct, or using external routes where appropriate.

However, social media is not usually the right place to raise complaints or make allegations. If you are unhappy with a lesson, rehearsal, decision, Staff member, Student, process or part of your course, use the appropriate Italia Conti route so the concern can be considered properly and fairly.

Posting publicly, or in a group chat, can make it harder to resolve the issue. It may also risk breaching confidentiality, harming another person, compromising an investigation, or escalating a situation unnecessarily.

This does not mean you cannot express views or raise concerns. It means serious concerns should be raised in the right way.

## **11. What not to post**

The Social Media Policy gives examples of unacceptable use. In Student-friendly terms, you should not post, share, forward or engage with content that:

- bullies, harasses, humiliates, threatens or intimidates another person;
- discriminates against someone because of sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, age or another protected or personal characteristic;

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- spreads rumours, lies, gossip or innuendo;
- mocks another person, whether deliberately or recklessly;
- shares someone's personal contact details or private information without permission;
- shares confidential information about Italia Conti, Staff, Students, assessments, complaints, disciplinary matters or internal documents;
- makes false, malicious, defamatory or misleading allegations;
- impersonates someone else or uses a fake identity to mislead people;
- implies that your personal view is the view of Italia Conti;
- uses the Italia Conti logo or branding without permission;
- discusses ongoing complaints, investigations, disciplinary matters or legal proceedings in a way that could compromise them;
- shares intrusive, intimate, explicit or sexual images or recordings without consent;
- encourages others to target, shame or harass someone.

This is not a complete list. The key question is whether the content could harm another person, breach privacy or confidentiality, damage a safe learning environment, break the law, or undermine professional standards.

## **12. Harassment, sexual misconduct and intimate images**

Some online behaviour may be referred under the **Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence Policy**.

This may include:

- unwanted sexual messages;
- sharing, threatening to share, or requesting intimate images;
- intrusive or explicit images or recordings shared without consent;
- stalking or obsessive online behaviour;
- grooming behaviours;
- coercive or threatening messages;
- hate-related harassment;
- online behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

If you experience or witness this type of behaviour, report it to the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team through the appropriate route. The Social Media Policy does not prevent anyone from reporting harassment, sexual misconduct or sexual violence, accessing support, going to the police, or using internal or external reporting routes.

## **13. Copyright, performances and creative material**

You must not assume that you can post creative material just because you are involved in it. This includes:

- choreography;
- scripts;
- songs;
- sheet music;
- backing tracks;
- rehearsal recordings;
- production footage;
- assessment material;
- professional workshop material;

- designs, costumes, sets or backstage content;
- another Student's creative work.

Some material may be protected by copyright, licensing agreements, image rights, performance rights or internal restrictions. If you are not sure whether something can be posted, ask before posting.

## **14. Using the Italia Conti name, logo or brand**

You must not use the Italia Conti logo, crest, branding, typeface or name in a way that suggests official approval unless you have permission. This includes:

- account names;
- handles;
- profile images;
- banners;
- promotional graphics;
- event pages;
- Student-led accounts;
- paid services;
- external projects;
- commercial activity.

You can identify yourself accurately as a Student where appropriate, but you must not create the impression that you are speaking for Italia Conti.

## **15. Digital footprint and future employability**

Your online presence is part of your professional profile.

Agents, casting directors, employers, producers, placement providers, collaborators and members of the public may look at your social media. They may form a view about your judgement, reliability, professionalism and suitability for work.

Before posting, consider:

- Does this show good judgement?
- Is it accurate?
- Is it kind?
- Is it professional?
- Could it be misunderstood?
- Could it embarrass or harm someone else?
- Would I be happy for this to be seen in a professional context?
- Does it reveal something private or confidential?
- Does it comply with Italia Conti policy?
- Could it affect my future opportunities?

The policy reminds Students that online behaviour is often permanently recorded and may affect future professional reputation.

## **16. Privacy and personal safety**

Protect your own privacy as well as other people's.

Be careful about sharing:

- your home address;
- your phone number;
- your location in real time;
- travel plans;
- daily routines;
- private images;
- login details;
- health or welfare information;
- family or relationship details;
- financial information;
- information that could identify where you live or when you are away.

Review your privacy settings regularly. Remember that privacy settings reduce risk, but they do not remove it. Friends, followers and group members can still screenshot, copy or share content.

## **17. Emergencies and live incidents**

During an emergency, only official Italia Conti channels should provide updates.

Do not post, livestream, speculate, share images or circulate information about a live incident unless authorised. This includes incidents involving:

- evacuation;
- lockdown;
- injury;
- police or emergency services;
- safeguarding;
- medical issues;
- security concerns;
- fire alarms or building incidents.

Sharing unverified information during an emergency can cause confusion, distress or risk.

## **18. What to do if something goes wrong**

If you post something and then realise it may be inappropriate:

1. Do not argue publicly.
2. Take a screenshot or keep a record if needed.
3. Remove the content if it is safe and appropriate to do so.
4. Tell an appropriate member of Staff if the issue may affect others, involve safeguarding, or relate to Italia Conti.
5. Ask for advice rather than hoping it will disappear.

If you receive or see harmful content:

1. Do not retaliate.
2. Keep evidence where safe to do so.
3. Report it through the appropriate route.
4. Seek support if the content is upsetting, threatening, discriminatory, sexual, abusive or intrusive.

## 19. Where to go for help

The right route depends on the issue.

- **Safeguarding, welfare, harassment, sexual misconduct or sexual violence:** Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team
- **Cyber-security or account compromise:** IT
- **Data protection concern:** Data Protection Officer
- **Complaint about course delivery, service or handling of a matter:** Complaints route
- **Whistleblowing concern:** SpeakUp@italiaconti.co.uk
- **Reputational, media or emergency issue:** Senior Leadership Team / Head of Student Services / Duty Manager
- **Uncertainty about whether to post something:** ask an appropriate member of Staff before posting

## 20. What happens if the policy is breached?

If there is a concern that the Social Media Policy has been breached, Italia Conti will consider the matter under the relevant Student procedure.

The response will depend on factors such as:

- what was posted or shared;
- whether the content was public or private;
- whether it was repeated, targeted, anonymous or malicious;
- whether someone was harmed or placed at risk;
- whether it involved bullying, harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct;
- whether confidential or personal information was disclosed;
- whether the content was removed when requested;
- whether freedom of speech, academic freedom or lawful expression are relevant;
- whether another Italia Conti policy also applies.

Students may be asked to remove content. Failure to remove content when reasonably requested may itself become a further issue.

No disciplinary finding or sanction will be made under the Social Media Policy without following the applicable procedure.

## 21. A simple checklist before posting

Before you post, ask:

- **Do I have permission?**
- **Is anyone else identifiable?**
- **Is this kind, fair and accurate?**
- **Could this be seen as bullying, harassment or discrimination?**
- **Does it reveal private or confidential information?**
- **Could it affect a complaint, investigation or disciplinary process?**
- **Could it damage someone's reputation or wellbeing?**
- **Could it damage my own professional reputation?**
- **Am I using Italia Conti's name, logo or brand appropriately?**
- **Would I still be comfortable with this being seen in a year's time?**

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If the answer to any of these questions gives you pause, do not post until you have checked.

## Update Log

12.02.2026	Updated in scope so that one policy addresses both Staff and Students
12.02.2026	Definitions of 'Staff' and 'Students' expanded
12.02.2026	3.3 expanded to include reference to the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2025 and align with our Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.
12.02.2026	5.3 – expanded, in line with partner university approach, to clarify three distinct types of social media accounts.
15.05.26	Student guide to the Italia Conti Social Media policy developed and added as an appendix