



UK Therapy Guild Academy of Integrative Counselling & Hypnotherapy Training

Social Media and Digital Communication Policy

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1. The UK Therapy Guild Academy of Integrative Counselling & Hypnotherapy (the "Academy") recognises that online platforms, including social media, website forums, and messaging apps like WhatsApp, are important tools for communication and community building.

1.2. This policy sets out the Academy's expectations for students when using these platforms in any way that relates to their training, the Academy, or the therapeutic professions. Its purpose is to ensure that all digital communication is professional, respectful, and safe, and aligns with the high standards required of trainee therapists.

1.3. This policy is a core component of the Student Code of Conduct. Breaches of this policy may call into question a student's suitability for the profession and may be addressed under the Academy's **Disciplinary Policy** and/or **Fitness to Practice Policy**.

2. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all enrolled students and covers all forms of digital communication and social media use that are linked to the Academy, including but not limited to:

- Posts on official Academy social media pages, student forums, or closed groups (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp).
- Posts on personal social media profiles that identify the individual as a student of the Academy or discuss the Academy, its staff, students, or placement providers.
- Any online content, including blogs, videos, or comments, that could reasonably be associated with the student in their capacity as a trainee therapist with the Academy.

3. Core Principles

All digital communication must be guided by the same ethical principles that govern therapeutic practice. Students must adhere to the **BACP Ethical Framework** and the Academy's **Equal Opportunities Policy** in all online interactions.

4. Professional Conduct and Responsibilities

4.1. **Respect and Professionalism:** Students must communicate with staff, peers, and placement providers respectfully and professionally at all times. * **Prohibited Conduct:** Any communication that is abusive, obscene, harassing, threatening, or bullying is strictly prohibited.

4.2. **Defamation and Disrepute:** Students must not post or share any content that could be considered defamatory, malicious, or damaging to the reputation of: * The UK Therapy Guild Academy, its staff, or its business model. * Other students. * Placement providers or their staff. * The therapeutic professions in general.

4.3. **Discrimination, Racism, and Bias:** In line with the Equal Opportunities Policy, any digital communication that is discriminatory or demonstrates prejudice based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation is strictly forbidden and will be treated as a serious breach of this policy.

4.4. **Confidentiality:** This is paramount. * Students **must not** share any information online that could identify a client or breach the confidentiality of their placement work. This includes anonymised details that, when combined with other information, could lead to identification. * Confidential discussions from within training sessions (e.g., personal disclosures in group work) must never be shared online.

4.5. **Intellectual Property:** Students must respect the Academy's intellectual property rights. Sharing or distributing copyrighted course materials, using the Academy's logo or business name without express written permission, is prohibited and a breach of the Student Contract.

4.6. **Representation and Boundaries:** When using personal social media, students must be clear that their views are their own and not those of the Academy. They must not present themselves as qualified therapists but as trainee therapists, in line with professional body guidelines.

5. Consequences of Breaching This Policy

5.1. The Academy monitors its official online platforms. Any content found to be in breach of this policy may be removed without notice.

5.2. Any reported or discovered breach of this policy will be taken very seriously and investigated thoroughly.

5.3. Depending on the severity of the breach, the Academy will invoke its formal procedures. This may include: * **Informal Action** for minor breaches. * A formal investigation under the **Disciplinary Policy** for serious or repeated breaches, which could lead to sanctions including suspension or termination of the student contract. * A referral to the **Fitness to Practice Policy** if the online conduct raises serious concerns about the student's suitability to be a therapist.

5.4. Students are reminded that their digital footprint can have lasting professional consequences.