College of Osteopaths
Information Communication Technology Policy

The College of Osteopaths is a small independent College, providing a service to the public and a part-time course for adult learners training to be registered osteopaths. Students attending the College are expected to have their own home access to broadband, a laptop or PC as an essential part of course registration so that they can access essential College materials that are provided online.

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Act) places a statutory duty on Higher Education Institutions– this is known as the Prevent Duty. The 2023 update of the guidance clarified the expectations. These are to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism, by supporting and advising those at risk, through our engagement with other specialist organisations The College's compliance with this duty is monitored by the Office for Students (OfS).

Board of Governors and Trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance and are trained along with other staff to ensure that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the Prevent Duty.

The College's Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Policy, when read in conjunction with the **'Acceptable I.T. Use Guide'**, sets out expectations for staff and students. The policy covers employees and regular contractors such as the clinical educators delivering training for students at the College.

The ICT policy is reflective of the limited access to equipment on site, professional healthcare expectations and the mode and delivery of the programme.

Hardware
The College's IT systems are limited in terms of computer availability and access. Access to desktop PCs is limited and use restricted to professional purposes. Desktop PCs for this purpose are in the clinics and offices.

The College provides network facilities for students to use and access resources using their own equipment. There is a separate protected network for staff. Students are unable to access the staff network.

Software
The College outsources the maintenance of the IT system to an external company who maintain and service the system and machines. They have remote access to the College networks, server and all College machine's including laptops. They manage and monitor security, and can block access to unsuitable websites and report inappropriate use to the College.

Email
a. Staff
The College gives designated employees access to an email facility to improve business communication and efficiency which includes communications to students. This is the primary purpose of this facility and although personal emails are permitted, The College expects staff not to abuse the facility. It is important that emails are not used to spread gossip or to distribute information, jokes or graphics that are or could be said to be, any of the following:

- sexist or sexual in nature,
- racist or otherwise discriminatory,
- obscene,
- offensive,
- defamatory,

- malicious and/or unacceptable nature,
- in conflict with any of the Colleges' policies e.g. Safeguarding and Prevent Policies
- in conflict with the interests of the College.

The distribution of chain letters or similar by email is expressly forbidden.

Staff are expected to abide by GDPR and not use emails to distribute information that is confidential in nature, unless appropriate permission has been sought or role allows.

Staff must not use emails to distribute anything that is copyright protected or to pursue or promote personal business interests. If in doubt, guidance should be sought from the appropriate line-manager

Messages sent by email could give rise to legal action against the College. It is therefore important that thought is given to the content of all emails and that hard copies are taken when necessary.

The College reserves the right to retrieve messages to assess whether the facility is being used for legitimate purposes, to retrieve information following suspected computer failure or to investigate alleged acts of wrongdoing. The College will not however, monitor emails as a matter of course.

Misuse of the email facility could result in an allegation of misconduct and disciplinary action.

b. Students

The University partners provide the students with an email address and this is the email the College uses to communicate with them. This email is also used to log-in to both College and University Blackboard systems. Student use of the University email address is subject to the relevant university IT use policy: **Staffordshire University IT Regulations** and **University of Derby IT Regulations**. This account is expected to be used to communicate matters related to the programme, and learning on the course, and will be used to communicate to students. It is important that it is accessed on a regular basis.

The College emails should not be used to spread gossip or to distribute information, jokes or graphics that are or could be said to be, any of the following:

- sexist or sexual in nature,
- racist or otherwise discriminatory,
- obscene,
- offensive,
- defamatory,
- malicious and/or unacceptable nature,
- in conflict with any of the College's policies e.g. Safeguarding and Prevent Policies
- in conflict with the interests of the College.

Misuse of the email facility could result in an allegation of misconduct.

Social media

a. Staff

The use of social networking sites during working time is not permitted, unless it is for work purposes ie adding posts to the College Social Media platforms.

Integrity and professionalism are of upmost importance, so staff are asked to be conscious about any personal social media and online activity that could intersect with their business persona.

The College of Osteopaths respects the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom of all ~~of its~~ staff, but ask staff to remember that patients, colleagues, students and professional bodies often have access to any online content posted. This includes information that can be seen by more than friends and family, and Information that can easily be shared, screen shot, or simply passed on.

Staff are reminded never to disclose non-public information about The College of Osteopaths (including confidential information), and to be aware that taking public positions online that are counter to the College's interests and policies might cause conflict and referral through the appropriate disciplinary channels.

Staff should never befriend a student who is studying on the programme. This can be misconstrued and give rise to conflicts of interest, as it can potentially put the member of staff in a position of power over the student.

Writing or posting anything that would embarrass or compromise The College of Osteopaths, or use of any social networking site that brings the College into disrepute, breaches the Employee Handbook, Harassment Policy or Safeguarding and Prevent, will be regarded as misconduct and could result in dismissal.

b. Students
Integrity and professionalism are of upmost importance for healthcare workers. Students are asked to be conscious about the social media persona that they project at the pre-registration stage as this could have a detrimental impact any future business and professional life.

The College of Osteopaths respects the **Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom** of all of students but remind students that professional bodies often have access to any online content posted. Inappropriate activity or professional claims, linked to students at the College can be picked up and reported even before registration.

Writing or posting anything that would embarrass or compromise The College of Osteopaths, or use of any social networking site that brings the College into disrepute, beaches the Student Conduct & Disciplinary Policy, Harassment Policy or Safeguarding and Prevent policies, could result in an allegation of misconduct, and could result in dismissal.

Online behaviour
The College has certain expectations of staff and students which should be adhered to when attending virtual meetings and taught sessions. The College is using Zoom and MS Teams for teaching and meeting purposes and there is a detailed **Online Teaching Session Policy** covering students and staff.

This Policy includes details about expectations around:

1. accessing meetings and sessions
2. recording
3. sending and responding to invites
4. accessing recordings