

London  
**Evening  
Standard**

**THE**   
**INDEPENDENT**

**EVENING STANDARD LIMITED AND INDEPENDENT PRINT LIMITED**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE ACTIVITIES POLICY**

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This Policy relates to the online activities of the Company's<sup>1</sup> employees, workers and freelance contributors. It covers the use of Twitter, Facebook and other social media, posting, commenting and blogging – all ways in which you express yourself online other than the approved material you create for the Company which it publishes online.

The fact is, if you work for or with the Company, readers and online users are likely to associate you with us. That means anything you state or comment may well be attributed to the Company in the public's mind, whether or not you flag up that you are tweeting or commenting in a personal capacity, and that is all the more likely if you are doing so during normal business hours. The Company could suffer significant reputational harm. As the law in this area has not yet been clarified, there is also a risk that the Company could face a legal claim as a result of what you have written.

The purpose of this Policy is to help you avoid legal and regulatory problems, on your own account and also in the Company's interests.

We have all read about civil servants or corporate staff who tweet, Facebook or comment unwisely, in what they naively believe to be only a personal capacity only, but the damage is felt by them in their work or professional standing and by their employer or entity they are associated with. This highlights the main principle: what you post or tweet is a public statement, it is hardly ever just private, and it is permanent. You need to think, always, am I happy to make this public? Use your judgement and if in doubt don't press send or enter. Apart from the well-known risk of ending up looking irresponsible in the eyes of a future employer, your job or any freelance arrangements with the Company could be put at risk.

You should follow these guidelines:

- You should not engage in any conduct, or write anything, that could damage the reputation of the Company or its publications. We are happy for you to engage in sensible and constructive discussions which increase exposure of the Company's content.
- Employees should reflect with particular care before tweeting, posting on Facebook or other social media, blogging or commenting during working hours.
- You must conduct yourself with professionalism and integrity in all circumstances.
- You must comply with the Company's Code of Conduct including all the Policies, and the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice, making sure you are familiar with both of these and keep up to date with developments.

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Company' means Evening Standard Limited, Independent Print Limited, their holding companies and fellow subsidiaries, jointly and/or separately as the context indicates.

- You should make it clear that the views you express are your own as distinct from those of the Company. This is not however a complete answer: engaging with someone in what might appear a purely personal row on Twitter would, for example, colour that person's view of the Company and its newspapers. That history could potentially be cited by that person should they subsequently bring a legal complaint against the Company, even on a completely unconnected issue.
- If you are an employee or retained contributor, your Twitter profile must state that you are tweeting in a personal capacity, as must your other online bios. Each individual associated with the Company must also include an *explicit* disclaimer to this effect when writing anything that directly concerns the Company or its interests. The guiding principle is that you should be clear and transparent in disclosing your affiliations, interests and other relevant background. As in print publication, you should take care to distinguish between facts and matters of opinion.
- You must not use the names of the publication or the Company in any name or identifier you use online/ on social media unless the Company has specifically authorised it in writing.
- You must comply with your duty of confidentiality towards the Company at all times.
- In your online activities you should not use a false persona to hide improper or unethical conduct, and you should comply with the terms of any website you are using.
- As an employee, or a regular or long term worker / freelance you are expected to give serious consideration to whether you bring a story to us before you publish it on Twitter or elsewhere.
- Remember that you tweet and post material online at your own risk, whether you are doing so in a personal capacity or in the course of your work with the Company. As you should know, you may be sued for libel as a result of the information or remarks you publish on social media networks. Check your facts and keep in mind that you could be liable for things you say online even if you are repeating / re-tweeting what someone else has said.
- Libel is not the only legal pitfall. The range of the law applies both on and off line, so you will also need to consider matters such as the law of contempt - where criminal (and other) proceedings are active - as well as breach of confidence, privacy, data protection, and copyright issues.
- Your postings, tweets and comments must not breach injunctions or other court orders. So you need to be extremely cautious not to drop hints relating to the subject or subject matter of an injunction, to repeat / re-tweet what someone else has hinted, or to direct people / link to places where they can find infringing information.
- You should respect the privacy to which your colleagues are entitled both in and out of the workplace - and you should not criticise them online.

If you have any concern about your activities online, or if you are considering blogging or posting anything which could present a potential conflict of interest with your work for or with us, you must refer to your manager, or if you are not an employee your link person at the Company .

If you receive any complaint about your work, or any other complaints which relate in any way to the Company, its products, or its journalists, you should at once contact the Legal Department<sup>2</sup> on [lawyers@independent.co.uk](mailto:lawyers@independent.co.uk). You should not say anything by way of response to the complainant unless you are instructed to do so by Legal.

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<sup>2</sup> The legal department should be consulted for guidance on all matters of Company business by any person to whom the Code of Conduct or the Policies apply, on both sides of the Evening Standard Limited / Independent Print Limited business.

**FAILURE TO COMPLY**

Failure to comply with any part of the Code of Conduct or a Policy, including this Social Media and Online Activities Policy, by an employee could lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedures, up to and including termination of employment. In the case of someone who is not an employee, the relationship or any arrangements with the Company could be terminated without notice, or such other action taken as the Company might decide. See the FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT OR A POLICY section of the Code of Conduct.

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