**CHAVASSE COURT CHAMBERS**

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Introduction**

1. This document sets out the compliance framework for members of Chavasse Court Chambers (‘Chambers’) in relation to social media.
2. Its principal object is to assist members in navigating the regulatory guidance issued by the Bar Standards Board in relation to social media.
3. Chambers accepts that its members may wish to maintain a social media presence for a variety of personal, creative and professional reasons and as such we welcome this in the trust that members will be mindful of the guidance below.

**Guidance**

1. The principal regulatory requirement engaged by the use of social media is that of Core Duty 5 which provides that no barrister must behave in a way that is likely to diminish the trust and confidence the public places in them or the profession.
   1. Clearly a litany of behaviours exist which could place a member in breach of this duty. Without the need for an exhaustive list, it is hoped that members will exercise good judgment in respect of this duty when engaging in any the following areas;

4.1.1 posting material online;

4.1.2 privately messaging individuals, organisations or groups;

4.1.3 sharing or producing any online content; or

4.1.4 promoting your business as a barrister through sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn etc.

4.2 Members are invited to carefully consider the content of what they are posting or sharing and the manner in which they express it.

4.3 Making comments that are seriously offensive, discriminatory, harassing, threatening, or bullying are likely to diminish public trust and confidence in them or the profession.

1. Rule C8 of the Bar Standards Board handbook provides that barristers must not to do anything which could reasonably be seen by the public to undermine their honesty and integrity (which barristers are required to act with under Core Duty 3) or their independence (which barristers must maintain pursuant to Core Duty 4).
2. Members are also reminded of Core Duty 6 - namely that barristers must keep the affairs of their clients confidential.

6.1 It is therefore inadvisable to send confidential communications to your professional or lay client over social media, but it is recognised this may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. it is necessary for your client’s safety; there is no other reliable means of contacting them or sharing information rapidly).

6.2 Chavasse Court Chambers endorses the considerations set out by the Bar Standards Board in that members should refrain from using social media to contact your lay client save where you have their express agreement and you are satisfied that their confidentiality will not be at risk.

6.2.1 If your lay client does wish to be contacted in this way, we encourage members to consider not only the security of the system or app that they are using (including any relevant settings to ensure that confidentiality is not at risk), but also its privacy policy. Some platforms allow the host to access otherwise private information.

1. Finally, members may also wish to have regard to less obvious risks such as;
   1. Advertising the fact that you are in a particular location at a particular time (perhaps via a "geotagged" status update revealing that you act for a particular client);
   2. Allowing yourself to appear on social media at venues or events in the company of professional opponents or clients whilst a case is ongoing; or
   3. Exposing Chavasse Court Chambers or its members and staff to the risk of regulatory contravention or reputational damage as a result of of content you capture, share or distribute.

**Complaints Regarding Social Media**

1. Any concerns or grievances reported to Chambers over an alleged misuse of social media shall be dealt with in accordance with Chambers’ complaints procedure and this guidance may be drawn upon in consideration of the same.

**Existing & Future Guidance**

1. All previous guidance in relation to social media at Chavasse Court Chambers is revoked.
2. The Compliance Officer will from time to time review this document and may make changes in accordance with their duties and in response to future developments.

**The Compliance Officer**

**Chavasse Court Chambers**

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