



ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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Communications Policy

Introduction

St Hugh's College recognises that consistent, effective and appropriate communications – both external and internal – are essential for the College to achieve its aims, objectives and policies, and to its credibility as part of the University of Oxford. This document outlines the principles for managing communications, including a summary of key strands of communications, and the responsibilities of staff in relation to communications.

The Scope

Governing Body, Fellows, Department Managers, Staff and Students should be aware of this policy. The aim of the Communications Policy is to reduce the risk to the College of damaging or ineffective communication, and to ensure that all staff are aware of how communications are best conducted externally and internally, and who has responsibility for which aspects. This policy should be used in conjunction with the College's Social Media and Photography and Filming policies.

Definitions

External Communications includes all the messages and information the College presents to different audiences, whether directly (through newsletters, marketing materials, social media channels and the website), or indirectly through the media and word of mouth. Audiences for external communications include students, alumni and stakeholders.

Internal Communications includes all messages and information (whether verbal or written) shared within the College, principally between members of staff, Fellows, Governing Body and students.

Policy Objectives

St Hugh's Communications Policy aims to:

- Improve the clarity with which the values and identity of the College are understood.
- Promote transparent and open communication.
- Provide clear and well-judged information at the most appropriate level of detail in relation to the needs of the reader or user.

The improvements and benefits which good communications should provide are:

- A greater likelihood of achieving the College's aims and objectives.
- A consistent range of tones which reinforces brand identity and enhances brand reputation.
- An effective approach to risk management, mitigating communication risks, such as potential misinterpretations or negative public perception.

- A trusting working environment in which staff and students can locate the information they require.

General Principles

- Effective communications play a positive role in the day-to-day operations of the College, through the careful consideration of content and the audience for any particular message or information to be disseminated.
- External and internal communications form part of strategic planning.
- Managers and staff have a responsibility to encourage good communications internally and externally.
- The College promotes a culture which encourages transparency of communications, clarity of style and the sharing of best practice and expertise across the College.
- A communications policy helps navigate the complexities of legal and regulatory requirements governing communication practices such as GDPR.

Principles for managing External Communications

Communications should be considered as part of the wider field of advocacy in which the College wishes to:

- Distribute high quality information about its strategies, plans and projects, ensuring key target audiences are well informed.
- Provide background and corporate information, principally through the website, as a reference source for a wide range of users.
- Ensure that the visual identity of the College, as shown through all its print and digital communications, is clear, coherent and expresses the College's key values.
- Create beneficial dialogue with its audiences using printed material and digital media to deliver key messages, answer queries and gain insights about the College's work.

Principles for managing Internal Communications

Internal communications is managed across the College to ensure that:

- An informal exchange of information is encouraged through the use of staff newsletter, notice boards, staff coffee morning and training events.
- The College's Staff Committee meets once a term to provide a formal setting for staff to voice their department's concerns relating to College activities and resources, and put forward ideas for events and activities.
- Staff are surveyed about effectiveness of internal communications.
- Regular exchanges through email and meetings (in person and online) are thoughtful, respectful, efficient and well disciplined.

Responsibilities

Communications Manager is responsible for:

- Acting as the public voice of the College and communicating with a variety of audiences via a range of media including social media, website, the staff newsletter, Chronicle and other printed material.
- The overall clarity and coherence of the College's external communications, including the website, social media and printed material, as well as branding (used for signage, uniforms, merchandise, publications etc.).
- Overseeing and managing the College's brand, including the implementation across College departments and its use by external partners.
- Working with The Principal, Bursar, Senior Tutor, Development Director Domestic Bursar and Head of HR to promote good external and internal communications.
- Seeking opportunities for good advocacy in order to promote the interests of the College.

Department Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that information is made available to the Communications Manager for distribution to the target audiences via the appropriate media channels.
- Ensuring that members of staff follow specific guidelines when communicating with the media and on social media, and when taking photographs or filming.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring online promotional content is approved by the Communications Manager, and that any media contact is referred to the Communications Manager for response.