Website and social media guidelines

Purpose and scope

Clare Hall recognises the benefits and opportunities that social media and its website offer. These channels help the College share research and news, publicise events and opportunities, connect its community and engage wider audiences.

These guidelines apply to all members and staff, including students, Fellows, Visiting Fellows, Life Members, committee members and those contributing on behalf of College clubs, societies and groups. They cover official and College-affiliated social media accounts, websites and online groups, as well as personal online activity where it relates to the College or its community. The copyright and image-use code also applies to all College-related publications, both printed and digital.

Everyone who creates, supplies, approves or publishes content is responsible for checking that it is accurate, respectful, accessible and lawful. Read these guidelines alongside the College and University policies relevant to your role, including conduct, harassment, data protection, confidentiality and IT use. Any concerns or breaches will be considered under the applicable procedures for the individual concerned.

General principles

- Treat others with respect. Express opinions and engage in debate without harassment, unlawful discrimination, threats or personal abuse. These guidelines support freedom of expression and academic freedom within the law. They should be read alongside the Clare Hall Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, the College's Policy on Personal Behaviour and the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.
- Check facts and sources before sharing content. Distinguish personal opinion from verified information and correct significant errors promptly.
- Protect confidential and sensitive information. Do not disclose private correspondence, restricted College business, unpublished research or personal information without appropriate authority.
- Use only content that you have the right to publish. Obtain the necessary permissions and provide the required credits before publication.
- Think before posting. Material shared in a private group can be copied or passed on, and deletion does not necessarily remove screenshots or archived copies.
- Consider the effect of a post on other people, your professional responsibilities and the College community. Do not imply that you speak for Clare Hall unless authorised to do so.

Personal social media use

- Personal accounts remain a matter of individual choice. Where you identify your College affiliation, make clear when you are expressing personal views. A disclaimer does not remove your responsibility for what you publish.
- Do not use the College or University crest, logo or branding in a way that makes a personal account appear official. Seek approval before using branding for a College-affiliated group.
- Review privacy settings, profile information and location sharing. Avoid disclosing someone else's location, contact details or private circumstances without their agreement.
- Be mindful of professional codes of conduct and legal restrictions, including those concerning harassment, defamation and active court proceedings.
- Take breaks and set boundaries around notifications and responses. If you are angry, distressed or tired, pause before posting or replying.

Managing College and group accounts

- Official College communications should be coordinated with the Communications and Marketing Manager (communications.manager@clarehall.cam.ac.uk). Contact them before setting up an account or website that will use the College's name or branding. Committee, society and group accounts should clearly identify the group responsible and avoid presenting themselves as the College's central account.
- Assign a named person responsible for each account and arrange appropriate backup access. Use approved account access methods, strong unique passwords and multi-factor authentication where available.
- Give access only to people who need it. Keep recovery details secure and current and remove access promptly when a role ends. Arrange a documented handover when staff or committee membership changes.
- Agree who may publish, who checks content and how urgent issues will be escalated. Never share passwords in public or informal group messages.

Moderation

- Check comments and messages regularly and publish clear group or page rules where appropriate. Apply rules consistently. Do not remove content simply because it expresses lawful criticism or disagreement. Remove or restrict spam, threats, harassment, discriminatory abuse or inappropriate disclosure of personal information in accordance with those rules, and retain necessary evidence securely when reporting a concern.
- Avoid arguments from an official account. Refer sensitive complaints, media enquiries and potentially serious incidents to the Communications and Marketing Manager or the appropriate College contact. Do not discuss confidential complaints in public replies.

Website content and publication

These requirements apply to the main College website, including pages maintained for committees, societies and events. Contributors should send content for the main website to the Communications and Marketing Manager (communications.manager@clarehall.cam.ac.uk) or publish only through their authorised access and agreed approval arrangements.

Preparing and approving content

- Confirm names, titles, dates, locations, booking details and links with the person responsible for the activity. Obtain any necessary approval for quotations, announcements and information supplied by third parties.
- Provide the final text, image files, captions, credits and evidence of permissions together. A contributor's assurance that an image is "from the internet" or "already published" is not sufficient.
- Use clear, inclusive language and accurate descriptions. Do not publish embargoed material before the agreed time or make commitments on the College's behalf without authority.
- Identify a content owner who can check that each page remains current. Review event information and contact details regularly; update, archive or remove outdated material as appropriate.

Accessibility

- Use meaningful headings, descriptive links and concise paragraphs. Make essential event details available as text, rather than only within a poster or image.
- Provide useful alternative text for informative images. Mark purely decorative website images as decorative. Include captions or transcripts for audio and video where needed, and check automated captions for errors.
- Use readable type and sufficient contrast. Check that downloadable documents are accessible and offer an accessible alternative where necessary.

Privacy and photographs of people

- Copyright permission and permission to use someone's personal information are separate matters. Before publishing identifiable photographs, recordings or personal details, follow the College's data protection and privacy arrangements and confirm the appropriate lawful basis. Obtain and record consent where required; attendance at an event does not in itself mean agreement to every subsequent use of an image.
- Explain planned photography or filming and how the material will be used. Respect objections and requests not to be photographed, and seek specific guidance before publishing images of children, vulnerable people or sensitive situations. Refer privacy concerns or removal requests promptly to the appropriate College contact and the Communications and Marketing Manager (communications.manager@clarehall.cam.ac.uk).

Copyright and image use code of practice

This code applies to everyone preparing material for Clare Hall, including staff, students, Fellows, committees, clubs and societies. It covers websites, social media, newsletters, magazines, posters, brochures, invitations, presentations, videos and other printed or digital publications.

Use material only where Clare Hall has the necessary rights, a suitable licence or permission, or a confirmed legal basis for use without permission. Give the required acknowledgement. Crediting the creator does not replace permission, and being available online does not make an image free to use.

Check the source and rights

- Identify the creator or rights holder and the original source. Do not assume that images found through search engines, social media, news websites or another institution's website can be copied. "No copyright intended" is not permission.
- Prefer College images with documented rights, original material cleared for publication, or images from a reputable source with a licence suitable for the intended use. Confirm the rights even when an image is supplied by a colleague, speaker, artist, student or committee member.
- Check the exact licence or obtain written permission from someone authorised to grant it. An email can provide a useful record. Payment for photography, possession of an image file or ownership of an artwork does not by itself establish unrestricted reproduction rights.

Check the proposed use

- Confirm that permission covers the intended publication and audience: print, website, social media, paid advertising and external distribution as relevant.
- "Royalty-free" does not mean free of charge or unrestricted. Read the provider's terms and keep a copy. Search filters and a download button are not proof of a valid licence.
- If the rights holder cannot be identified or the terms are unclear, do not publish the material until the position is resolved. Use an alternative image or ask the Communications and Marketing Manager (communications.manager@clarehall.cam.ac.uk) for guidance. Do not rely on an educational purpose or a copyright exception without checking that it applies to the particular use.

Credits and permission records

- Place credits clearly alongside the image, in the caption or in another location permitted by the licence. Follow the rights holder's required wording. For Creative Commons material, include the creator, title where supplied, source, licence and a note of any changes, with links where practicable.
- Keep a shared permissions record accessible to the relevant College team or committee. For each asset, record the filename, creator or rights holder, original source, permission or licence evidence, permitted uses, restrictions, expiry date if any, required credit, and where it has been published. Retain this with the publication records and hand it over when responsibilities change.

Photographs and other creative works

- Agree usage rights and credit wording when commissioning a photographer or designer. For images of artworks, book covers, illustrations or other protected material, check whether permission is needed for both the photograph and the work depicted. Do not remove watermarks or copyright notices, or alter work contrary to the permission granted.
- Apply the same checks to text, graphics, maps, music, film clips and recordings. Permission to record an event is not automatically permission to publish every element. Confirm any necessary rights in performances, presentations and accompanying music. Music available within a platform may have restrictions on account type, promotional use or use elsewhere.
- Use platform sharing tools appropriately when directing audiences to authorised original content. Downloading and republishing content requires a separate rights check. Do not use AI editing or generation to bypass copyright restrictions; check relevant terms and avoid images that misleadingly represent real people, events or College activities.

Before anything is published

- The facts, wording and publication approval have been checked.
- The source and rights holder are known, and permission or another valid basis for use is documented.
- Required credits are included, and privacy and accessibility checks are complete.
- The permissions record is saved and the person responsible for future updates is identified.

If a copyright concern is raised

Promptly notify the Communications and Marketing Manager (communications.manager@clarehall.cam.ac.uk), preserve the relevant permissions and publication records, and pause further use. Remove or disable access to material whose rights cannot be demonstrated while the concern is reviewed. Refer claims or payment demands for appropriate College advice; do not negotiate or admit liability on the College's behalf without authority.

Harassment and support

- Anyone who experiences or witnesses harassment, threats or other unacceptable behaviour online should seek support and report it through the College procedure relevant to their circumstances. Students can contact their Tutor; staff can contact their line manager or the College contact responsible for HR matters. Other members can contact the appropriate College officer. If the usual contact is involved in the concern, use an alternative contact or the relevant formal reporting procedure.
- Keep evidence such as screenshots, dates and links, where safe to do so, without circulating harmful material more widely. Use the platform's reporting and blocking tools as appropriate. For immediate danger, contact the emergency services.
- For inappropriate content on a College channel, publication queries, copyright concerns or help with these guidelines, contact the Communications and Marketing Manager (communications.manager@clarehall.cam.ac.uk).

How Clare Hall uses its online channels

The College uses its website and social media channels to share news, research, events and opportunities. It welcomes contributions from all parts of the community. Send material to the Communications and Marketing Manager (communications.manager@clarehall.cam.ac.uk), including relevant publication permissions and image credits, and tag the College's official accounts when sharing suitable public content.

Clare Hall currently manages a Facebook page, LinkedIn, BlueSky, Instagram and YouTube account, as well as a LinkedIn group. The Graduate Student Body also runs a Facebook group, WhatsApp community groups, and an Instagram account.

The College takes an interest in public posts that tag or refer to Clare Hall and in content from accounts it follows, to identify community news and activities. This does not grant automatic permission to republish material: the same copyright and privacy checks apply.

The College does not use social media for routine speculative monitoring of members or staff. Relevant public material may be considered when a concern is reported, in accordance with applicable policies and privacy obligations. Private-group settings cannot prevent participants from taking screenshots or reporting content.

In addition, social media privacy settings do not prevent other users taking screen grabs, in order to share a post with a wider audience or to report issues to the College or other authorities, even if the relevant content has since been deleted. In very serious cases, the law allows for the investigation of private posts by the police.

The University reserves the right to request the removal of content from an official social media account if it is deemed that the account or its submissions pose a risk to the reputation of the University, or to that of one of its members.

Related policies and further guidance

Use the current College policies and the University procedures applicable to your role. These guidelines do not replace those procedures. The following sources support the copyright and accessibility guidance.

Clare Hall policies documents and statutes

University of Cambridge social media guidelines

Intellectual Property Office guidance on digital images and photographs

GOV UK using somebody else's copyright material

Creative Commons licence types and attribution guidance

W3C guidance on accessible images