INTERNET, EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

What does this policy cover?

We believe that the use of the internet, e mail and social media can be used positively by our staff and volunteers to promote our work and our aims. It's a valuable communication tool that helps us stay in touch with partners and young people. It does however need to be used with care to protect employees, the organisation and the young people/adults we work with. This policy provides some guidelines to ensure that we use this responsibly.

1. Email Communication

- Email communication must meet the same standards as other published documents.
- Esteem's work relies on a high level of discretion, confidentiality and tact. You should always take care to ensure that your email correspondence meets these standards at all times. Remember that anyone can ask to see correspondence in which they are identified
- Employees are permitted to use telephones and the email system for occasional and brief personal messages.
- In cases where Esteem has belief that the email system is being abused for non-legitimate use or in contravention of the statements in this policy document, then the organisation may intercept and read email correspondence. Similarly, the Chief Executive, trustees and nominated IT support services will have access to all files stored by employees on Esteem computers or other media.

2. Internet Usage

- All employees are allowed access to the Internet for Esteem work.
- Keep any personal use to a minimum, it can be easy to get caught up in time-consuming 'browsing'.
- The downloading or viewing of pornographic, offensive, obscene, or indecent material is strictly forbidden and constitutes 'gross misconduct'. The use of Esteem computers for this purpose, or similar purposes, will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

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- You should also be aware of the risk of copyright law infringement and from relying unduly on the use of unregulated information, which may not be accurate.
- All software used at Esteem should be from controlled legal sources authorised by the Chief Executive. You should not download software from websites to Esteem's computers.

3. Social Media

We encourage employees to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites as part of their work. It is an important aspect of our work to promote our services and raising profile and a key means of communicating with potential and existing clients.

Employees may contribute to the organisation's social media activities, for example by writing for our blogs or running an official Twitter account.

Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the organisation's social media activities, they are representing the organisation.

Employees should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the organisation in the public sphere.

- making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for Esteem;
- obtaining permission from a manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media and getting the manager to check the content.

Any communications that employees make in a professional capacity through social media must not:

- bring Esteem into disrepute, for example by:
  o criticising or arguing with service users, colleagues or rivals;
  o making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
  o posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
  o making political or secular? comments.
- breach confidentiality, for example by:
  o giving away confidential information
  o discussing Esteem's internal business;
- breach copyright, for example by:
  o using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
  o failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or
- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
  o making offensive, derogatory or discriminatory comments
  o using social media to bully another individual

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o posting images or links to content that are discriminatory or offensive

Employees should not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites, even if they claim to be doing so as part of their work. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on employees' productivity. They should ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their other duties. Esteem reserves the right to monitor employees' internet usage but will endeavour to inform an affected employee when this is to happen and the reasons for it.

Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

Esteem recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of Esteem, employees must be aware that they can damage the organisation if they are recognised as being one of our employees.

Employees are allowed to say that they work for the organisation, which recognises that it is natural for its staff sometimes to want to discuss their work on social media. However, the employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain Esteem's name.

If employees do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which the organisation operates), they must include on their profile a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

The same criteria outlined in paragraph 4.5 apply equally to employees use of any communications made in a personal capacity.

4. Using Own Equipment and Home Working

All work for Esteem must be carried out on equipment that is provided for work and not personal equipment. This is important to protect the security and confidentiality of our work. Any work from home for Esteem should be carried out on the equipment provided and only be saved and synchronised on the Esteem drive.

- Do not share passwords with colleagues, friends or family
- Do not leave work laptops/computers unattended at home or in the office, and if they are, ensuring they are locked and inaccessible to any other person in the home or public environment
- When working from home or in public, and viewing any personal data about staff, volunteers or beneficiaries, be mindful not to work in a position where the screen can be seen by others.

Esteem understands that employees may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops, tablets and smart phones, to access the internet and social media websites while they are in their rest breaks. The security of this equipment is the responsibility of individual employees.

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5. Disciplinary Action

All employees are required to adhere to this policy. Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example downloading of pornography, incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the organisation, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal (**See Disciplinary Policy).**

Document Control

Virginia Sampaio is the owner of this document and is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed in line with the review requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.

A current version of this document is available to all members of staff on the company Google Drive and is published in the employee handbook and esteem.org.uk

This policy was approved by the Peter Latham and is issued on a version-controlled basis under her/his signature.

Signature: Date:

Revisions to this document		
Revision number:	Date:	Description on modifications:
01	21/11/2018	Formatting of Document
02	25/01/2019	Inclusion of 'gross misconduct' re pornography, & bullet points