

**Reigate College**  
**Student Guide to**  
**Getting Started on LinkedIn**  
**2024/25**



**What is LinkedIn?** A social network for professionals where people can connect, share work experiences, and find job opportunities.

**Why join?** It's a valuable tool to help build your career, including networking and learning from industry experts. However, sharing too much personal information can be risky, so it's important to manage privacy settings carefully.

**Reigate College LinkedIn Groups:**

- **Current Students** – Join anytime and stay until you leave.
- **Alumni Network** – Join after leaving to access a community of past students who may offer valuable career contacts and informal advice.

**Summary of LinkedIn Etiquette:**

- Build a professional, authentic profile that highlights your skills and interests, even if you have limited work experience.
- Always be professional, mindful of your privacy, and thoughtful when networking.
- Engage gradually by following relevant companies, connecting with professionals, and participating in respectful conversations.
- Use LinkedIn Learning or other resources to develop skills and increase employability.
- Be consistent and patient. Building a network takes time. Regularly update your profile, engage with content, and nurture connections.

**Top Tips for Using LinkedIn Effectively and Safely**

**1. Create a Strong Profile**

- Keep your LinkedIn profile updated – it's your living CV!
- Write a clear headline (under your name) to quickly convey your goals, like "Aspiring Graphic Designer" or "Interested in Marketing & Business."
- Use a professional photo – avoid holiday pictures and opt for a well-lit headshot.
- Include a summary of your education, volunteering, and aspirations. Even without formal work experience, highlight school clubs, voluntary roles, and personal projects to stand out.
- List transferable skills like teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and leadership. Think about skills gained through coursework, hobbies, or volunteering. Ask relevant contacts to endorse these skills.
- Be authentic while maintaining professionalism.
- Customize your LinkedIn URL (e.g., [linkedin.com/in/johnsmith](https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnsmith)) for a more professional look.

## **2. Protect Your Personal Data and Stay Safe**

- Decide on your privacy settings – “Public” or “Connections Only.” Adjust these in LinkedIn’s Privacy section.
- You can keep contact details private while allowing employers to view your education and work history.
- Avoid sharing personal details like your home address or phone number.
- Be alert to scammers – LinkedIn may attract fake recruiters or unsolicited job offers. Always verify opportunities and don’t give out personal or financial information. Research companies and recruiters online before engaging.

## **3. Build Your Professional Network Gradually**

- Start by connecting with people you know; family, friends, teachers, and mentors.
- Follow companies and industry leaders to stay updated on trends, job openings, and career advice.
- Connect with professionals in fields you're interested in.
- Personalize connection requests: Explain why you're reaching out and what you hope to learn from their experience. A tailored message is more impactful than a generic one.
- Keep your messages professional, clear, and concise.
- Avoid excessive follow-ups – if you don’t receive a response after a reasonable time, move on.
- Check any incoming connection requests to ensure the person is relevant to your professional goals.

## **4. Be Active on the Platform**

- Engage with posts – Like, comment, and share content from professionals or companies you follow. This boosts visibility and shows your interest in your field.
- Join Groups – Find industry-specific groups to expand your network, ask questions, and learn from others.
- Use LinkedIn’s Job Search tools to explore internships, apprenticeships, and graduate schemes. Set up job alerts to be notified of new listings.
- Take advantage of LinkedIn Learning – Access free (and paid) courses to enhance your employability and develop skills relevant to your career aspirations.