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## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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### **Social media definition**

Social media is an interactive online media that allows users to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. It includes social and business networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and LinkedIn. Social media also covers video and image sharing websites such as YouTube, Pinterest and Flickr, as well as personal blogs. This is a constantly changing area with new websites being launched on a regular basis and therefore this list is not exhaustive. This policy applies in relation to any social media that employees may use.

### **Use of social media**

Employees are allowed to access social media websites from hospice computers or devices and/or personal devices only during lunch time or out of office hours. The exception would be where accessing such websites is for hospice networking purposes.

### **Hospice social media activities**

The marketing and communications team manages the hospice's official social media pages and activity. No other hospice department or individual should create or manage a social media account or page linked to the hospice (or one which could be perceived to be linked to the hospice) unless they have received prior permission by the head of marketing and communications. Access to any such accounts must also be given by the head of marketing and communications. If there is an account in existence already, please make the marketing and communications team aware.

Employees may be asked by the marketing and communications team to contribute to the hospice's own social media activities during normal working hours. Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the social media activities, they are representing the hospice.

When an employee contributes to the hospice's own social media activities as part of their work or on a personal basis, for example to engage with posts made by the marketing and communications team on the hospice's official pages, post information on their own page, or post on other relevant organisation's official pages, they must ensure that they:

- use the same safeguards as they would with any other type of communication about the hospice that is in the public domain, upholding the hospice's reputation at all times
- any communication has a purpose and a benefit for the hospice
- do not pre-empt any planned hospice PR or promotional activity by giving away news or updates not yet in the public domain. Hospice social media activity is often executed in an integrated way with agreed timescales. If in doubt, check first with a member of the marketing and communications team
- follow any additional guidelines given by the hospice from time to time
- do not publicise information which may be sensitive or confidential

## Social media rules

The hospice recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity outside the workplace and outside normal working hours. While they are not acting on behalf of the hospice in these circumstances, employees must be aware that they can still cause damage to the hospice if they are recognised online as being one of its employees. Therefore, it is important that the hospice has strict social media rules in place to protect its position.

When logging on to and using social media websites and blogs at any time, including personal use on non-hospice computers outside the workplace and outside normal working hours, employees **must not**:

- comment on or post any information that is confidential or not yet in the public domain or that would pre-empt any planned announcement by the hospice, and, in postings that could be linked to the hospice, employees must also ensure that any personal views expressed are clearly stated to be theirs alone and do not represent those of the hospice
- conduct themselves in a way that is potentially detrimental to the hospice or brings the hospice or its clients, customers, contractors or suppliers into disrepute, for example by posting images or video clips that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate website content
- use their work e-mail address when registering on such sites or provide any link to the hospice's website other than in relation to the hospice's own social media activities or other than where expressly permitted by the hospice on business networking websites such as LinkedIn,
- allow their interaction on these websites or blogs to damage working relationships with or between employees and clients, customers, contractors or suppliers of the hospice, for example by criticising or arguing with such persons;
- include personal information or data about the hospice's employees, clients, customers, contractors or suppliers without their express consent (an employee may still be liable even if employees, clients, customers, contractors or suppliers are not expressly named in the websites or blogs as long as the hospice reasonably believes they are identifiable) - this could constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 which is a criminal offence;
- make any derogatory, offensive, discriminatory, untrue, negative, critical or defamatory comments about the hospice, its employees, clients, customers, contractors or suppliers (an employee may still be liable even if the hospice, its employees, clients, customers, contractors or suppliers are not expressly named in the websites or blogs as long as the hospice reasonably believes they are identifiable);
- make any comments about the hospice's employees that could constitute unlawful discrimination, harassment or cyber-bullying contrary to the Equality Act 2010 or post any images or video clips that are discriminatory or which may constitute unlawful harassment or cyber-bullying - employees can be personally liable for their actions under the legislation;
- disclose any secret or confidential, proprietary or sensitive information belonging to the hospice, its employees, patients, and stakeholders.
- breach copyright or any other proprietary interest belonging to the hospice, for example, using someone else's images or written content without permission or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce particular work - if employees wish to post images, photographs or videos of their work colleagues or clients, customers, contractors or suppliers on their online profile, they should first obtain the other party's express permission to do so.

Employees must remove any offending content immediately if they are asked to do so by the hospice.

Where access to social media accounts has been authorised. The guidelines below set out the expectations of all staff who post on any hospice social media accounts.

Our social media posts should be:

- Professional, friendly but not overfamiliar
- Spelt correctly
- No text speak
- Relevant
- Good quality, with images which are relevant and that have consent from the subject
- Factually correct.

### **Posts**

- Write clear, relevant messages, conveyed concisely. Keep it short and to the point, correctly spelt with correct punctuation.
- Do not write tenuous links to things, keep to the point.
- If opportunities to post happen while you are out and about – post when you're out – keep it timely. The opportunity may be missed if you wait.
- Do not write personal, political or offensive posts on hospice social media.

### **Photos**

- Make sure they are clear, of good quality, properly cropped, relevant, and that you have permission to use them from both the person who took the photo and from the subject.

### **Hashtags**

- Keep them relevant, don't overuse
- Fundraising asks – tell followers where they need to go for more information – use links to our public website, e.g. to sign up to Bubble rush visit...
- Short links – try and use a link shortener that can be tracked, e.g. Bitly
- Suggested general Hashtags – depending on nature of post - would be: #StElizabethHospice #Suffolk #(relevant location) #Charity #ShopLocal #Volunteer #ThankYou #Care #Fundraising #CharityShop

### **Responding to post messages**

- The marketing team respond to messages received in the Facebook inbox, and to comments on posts that they have made. The community fundraising team manage Facebook fundraisers.
- If you make a post that generates comments, respond to them in a timely manner.
- If a comment or message is negative, derogatory or offensive, this must be reported to your line manager immediately. Do not respond to such remarks yourself.

### **Reminders:**

- Have you got permission to use an image?
- Just because you found it on Google, doesn't mean it's free to use. The marketing team have access to stock images, please contact them if you need any imagery.
- Have you checked your spelling?
- Use correct spelling and proper grammar in hospice posts.
- Have you checked the facts?
- Have you got the details right? Dates, times, pricing should all be double checked.
- Is the post relevant and engaging?
- The post needs to be of interest to our followers.
- If a post on any of the hospice social media platforms is found to contain errors, be factually incorrect or is not in keeping with the tone or ethos of the hospice, it will either be removed or amended to fit within the above guidelines.

Work and business contacts made during the course of employment through social media websites (such as the names and contact details of existing or prospective customers, clients and suppliers) and which are added to personal social and business networking accounts (in particular to LinkedIn), or which are stored on the hospice's computer system, amount to confidential information belonging to the hospice and accordingly must be shared on termination of employment.

Employees should remember that any social media website is a public forum, even if they have set their account privacy settings at a restricted access or "friends only" level, and therefore they should not assume that their postings on any website will remain private.

Employees must also be security conscious when using social media websites and should take appropriate steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by placing their privacy settings at a high level and restricting the amount of personal information they give out, e.g. date and place of birth. This type of information may form the basis of security questions and/or passwords on other websites, such as online banking.

Should employees notice any inaccurate information about the hospice online, they should report this to their line manager in the first instance. This should then be brought to the attention of the marketing team.

In addition, such social media accounts which are operated for business purposes (and their contents) belong to the hospice and therefore such accounts used by an employee during employment may not be used or accessed after termination of employment. Similarly, staff who operate a personal social media account e.g. Twitter which is used for agreed networking on behalf of the hospice must cease to represent the hospice in this way after termination of employment.

### **Social media monitoring**

The hospice reserves the right to monitor employees' use of social media on the Internet, both during routine audits of the computer system and in specific cases where a problem relating to excessive or unauthorised use is suspected. The purposes for such monitoring are to:

- promote productivity and efficiency
- ensure the security of the system and its effective operation
- make sure there is no unauthorised use of the hospice's time
- ensure that inappropriate, restricted or blocked websites are not being accessed by employees
- make sure there is no breach of confidentiality.

The hospice reserves the right to restrict, deny or remove Internet access, or access to particular social media websites, to or from any employee.

### **Contravention of this policy**

Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this policy is a disciplinary offence and may result in disciplinary action being taken under the hospice's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

#### **DOCUMENT HISTORY:**

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Review date</b>
1	Jan 2016	Bi annual review	Head of Marketing & Comms	SMT	Jan 2018
2	Jan 2018	Bi annual review	Head of Marketing & Comms	SMT	Jan 2020
3	Jun 2020	Bi annual review	Senior Fund Marketing Officer	Senior Leadership Team	Jun 2022
4	Jun 2022	Bi annual review	Simon Ward - Senior Press and Campaigns Officer	Senior Leadership Team	Jun 2024
5	Jun 2024	Bi annual review	Simon Ward - Senior Press and Campaigns Officer	Senior Leadership Team	Jun 2026