



Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Social media is a powerful tool that allows West Sussex Music to raise awareness, engage with beneficiaries, and attract supporters. However, with these benefits come certain risks. This policy outlines guidelines for the responsible use of social media by trustees, staff, and volunteers, ensuring that our organisation's mission is advanced while protecting its reputation and safeguarding children and young people.

2. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Maximise the positive impact of social media for West Sussex Music.
- Protect the organisation from potential legal, reputational, and ethical risks.
- Ensure that all social media activities align with the organisation's mission and values.
- Guide staff, trustees, and volunteers on appropriate conduct on social media platforms, both professionally and personally.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All official West Sussex Music social media accounts.
- Trustees, staff, and volunteers who manage or contribute to the organisation's social media channels.
- Personal social media accounts where an individual's connection to the organisation is publicly stated or could reasonably be inferred.

Which social media channels do we use?

- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/WestSussexMusic>

West Sussex Music has a Facebook account which it uses to share news, vacancies and updates with parents, teachers, schools and the wider community, celebrating current work and to promote further opportunities. A private community group for Alumni is a place to encourage people to stay involved with WSM.

- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/westsussexmusic/>

The Instagram account is used to share news and updates with schools, Partner organisations and younger people involved with the organisation.

- LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/west-sussex-music-trust>

West Sussex Music has a LinkedIn account which it uses to share news and updates with teachers, partner organisations and alumni. It is followed predominantly by musicians and people in higher education from the London and southeast areas.

- YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzliRUIrqEfTrYHGpBKFJjQ>

The YouTube account is used to share videos of performances, very limited audience data but aiming for audience of younger people involved, partner organisations and educators.

- X – X.com/WestSussexMusic – is currently dormant.

Policy ownership

The Communications Manager is responsible for authoring and updating this document. The policy must be approved by the trustees and reviewed every two years, unless a significant change requires the organisation to check the policy before the next review date. All staff and volunteers will be notified of updates.

4. Social media use guidelines

4.1 Professional conduct

- Content Sharing: All content shared through official social media accounts must be consistent with the organisation’s mission, non-political, respectful, and compliant with relevant laws (e.g., GDPR, defamation, copyright, and equality laws).
- Respectful Engagement: When engaging with the public, responses should be professional, respectful, and in line with the organisation’s values. Personal attacks, inflammatory remarks, or offensive language will not be tolerated.
- Moderating Comments: Moderation should be used when necessary to prevent harmful content from appearing on organisation accounts. We reserve the right to delete or report inappropriate, harmful, or illegal content.
- Risk Mitigation: The CEO should approve any high-risk posts, particularly on emotive topics or political campaigns. A risk assessment should be conducted before sharing potentially controversial content.

4.2 Personal use of social media

- Transparency: If you are a trustee, staff member, or volunteer publicly associated with West Sussex Music, you must be cautious when expressing personal views online, particularly on issues related to the organisation's work.
- Disclaimer: Individuals who discuss organisation-related matters on their personal accounts should include a disclaimer clarifying that views are their own and do not represent the organisation.

- Conflict of Interest: Personal social media activity should not conflict with the organisation's objectives. If a post negatively affects the organisation, appropriate actions will be taken, including requesting the removal of the content or conducting an internal review.

5. Managing social media accounts

5.1 Responsibilities

- Day-to-Day Management: The Communications Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of West Sussex Music's social media channels.
- Crisis Management: In the event of a social media crisis, The Communications Manager will work with the CEO and senior management to take corrective action, which may include making a public statement or removing content.
- Account Security: Access to social media accounts must be carefully managed to ensure only authorised individuals have posting privileges. Passwords must be secure and regularly updated.

5.2 Refer press enquiries

If a staff member or volunteer is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to West Sussex Music, they should talk to the Comms Manager and CEO immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

5.3 Engaging with the public

- Facilitating Engagement: We encourage positive engagement with our followers and beneficiaries through social media but will not tolerate hate speech, offensive language, or illegal content on our platforms. We may report or block users who violate these guidelines.
- Content Moderation: Staff responsible for moderating content should be trained to use moderation tools available on the platforms, such as hiding or deleting inappropriate comments.

6. Legal and regulatory compliance

All social media activities must comply with:

- Data Protection and Privacy Laws: Including GDPR and privacy rights, particularly when sharing images or stories of beneficiaries. Consent must be obtained where required.
- Copyright and Intellectual Property Laws: Ensure that content such as images or videos are used legally and appropriately sourced.
- Defamation Law: Avoid making statements that could harm an individual or organisation's reputation.
- Fundraising Standards: All social media fundraising campaigns must adhere to the Code of Fundraising Practice.

7. Political campaigning and advocacy

West Sussex Music can engage in advocacy and campaigning within the boundaries of organisation law. Any political activity must be non-partisan and comply with our campaigning guidance, especially during election periods. Trustees and staff must be fully aware of the rules governing such activity on social media.

8. Safeguarding and safety online

- Protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Users: Special consideration must be given when interacting with children, young people and vulnerable individuals online. West Sussex Music staff, trustees and volunteers must also abide by company's Child protection & Safeguarding Policy, Online Learning Policy & Acceptable Use of IT Policy at all times.
- Cybersecurity: Ensure account security through strong passwords which are changed regularly, and regular monitoring for fake accounts that may misrepresent the organisation. Report any suspicious accounts to the social media platform immediately to the Communications Manager.

9. Reporting and responding to incidents

- Breach of Policy: Any breach of this policy, such as posting harmful content or violating legal obligations, will be taken seriously. Depending on the severity, actions could range from content removal to reporting incidents to authorities, including the Charity Commission or the police.
- Serious Incidents: Any incident causing significant harm or reputational damage must be reported to the CEO.

10. Responsibilities

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.

Participation in social media on behalf of West Sussex Music is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect.

Breaches of policy or inappropriate behaviour may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our employee handbook for further information on our processes. Staff and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the CEO.

11. Review and continuous improvement

- This policy should be reviewed annually by trustees to ensure it remains fit for purpose and responds to emerging risks or opportunities.
- Training and guidance will be provided to trustees, staff, and volunteers to ensure compliance with this policy.

12. Conclusion

By adhering to this policy, West Sussex Music ensures responsible and effective use of social media that aligns with our mission, protects our reputation, and engages our community in a meaningful, respectful, and lawful manner.

This social media policy ensures West Sussex Music uses social media responsibly to benefit its mission while safeguarding the organisation and its community against potential risks.