

Saintfield Development Association

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for members on using social media to promote the work of the Saintfield Development Association and in a personal capacity

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

SDA will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: October 2019.

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating the work of SDA. It is important for some members to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of SDA.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to SDA's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all members and applies to content posted on both an SDA device and a personal device. Before engaging in SDA-related social media activity, members must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of SDA and the use of social media by members in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help you support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the SDA and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

Our Communications team is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the team leader. No other member can post content on SDA's official channels without the permission of the Communications team leader.

Which social media channels do we use?

SDA uses the following social media channels:

Facebook: *discoversaintfield*

Instagram: *@discoversaintfield*

Website: *www.discoversaintfield.com*

Guidelines

Using SDA social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The Communications team is responsible for setting up and managing SDA's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Communications team leader will have access to these accounts.
2. Be an ambassador for SDA. Members should ensure they reflect SDA values in what they post and use our tone of voice.
3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for SDA and accurately reflects SDA's agreed position.
4. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
5. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
6. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
7. If persons outside of the communications team wish to contribute content for social media, they should speak to the team leader about this.
8. Members shouldn't post content about supporters or users without their express permission. If staff are sharing information about supporters or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from SDA. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, please ensure you have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
9. Always check facts. Do not automatically assume that material is accurate and take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
10. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
11. Refrain from offering personal opinions via SDA's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'.
12. It is vital that SDA does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
- 13 Do not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.
- 14 Do not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of SDA. This could confuse messaging. By having official social media accounts in place, the SDA can ensure consistency and focus on building a strong following.
- 15 SDA is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with, or links to, political parties. SDA can comment on policies, including those of political parties, where it considers the policies would have an impact on SDA. Otherwise SDA should remain politically neutral.

16. If a complaint is made on SDA's social media channels, seek advice from the Communications team leader or the SDA Chair or Vice Chair before responding.

17. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the reputation of SDA. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to SDA. If any member becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on SDA's social media channels or elsewhere, they should advise the Communications team leader immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. SDA members are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with SDA values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive SDA. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of SDA. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about SDA's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent SDA's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Members who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they are a member of SDA should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Communications team leader.

3. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with SDA and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public.

4. SDA inter-acts with several high-profile people, including councillors, politicians, journalists and donors. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support SDA, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the SDA. This includes asking for retweets about SDA.

If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our objectives, or if there is someone who you would like to support our efforts, please speak to the Chair to share the details.

5. If a member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to SDA, they should talk to the Communications team leader immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

6. SDA is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing SDA, staff are expected to maintain the SDA's position of neutrality. Those who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from SDA and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

7. Never use SDA logos unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Communications team leader.

8. Always protect yourself and SDA. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites, it is important that you do so safely.

9. Think about your reputation as well as that of SDA. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

10. We encourage members to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support SDA and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage members to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Communications team leader, who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their portfolio or in a personal capacity, they should not bring SDA into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all members abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that SDA is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Members should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official SDA social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Chair.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the [job title] immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, you should ensure the online relationship with SDA follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary.

Responsibilities and beach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of SDA is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. Breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Members who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Communications team leader.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a member releases information through SDA's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, the SDA committee must be advised before any further action is taken.