Social Media Policy

STUDENTS' GUILD

Social Media Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy is in place to minimise the risks to the organisation through use of social media, whilst recognising that participation in social media is an effective way of building engagement and member trust.

1.2 This policy aims to encourage employees, volunteers and members of the Guild to use social media in a positive and influential way, whilst recognising their responsibility to manage and preserve a professional reputation, be respectful to others and adhere to data and privacy obligations.

2 Scope

2.1 For the purpose of this policy, social media is defined as any online interactive tool which encourages participation, interaction and exchanges. This includes existing platforms and any new applications that emerge as well as blogs, discussion forums, instant messaging and any website which allows public commenting or posting.

2.2 This policy provides information to individuals on the appropriate use of social media when working for or representing the Guild, or when directly or indirectly referencing the Guild or any member of the Guild community.

2.3 This policy applies to all employees, Officers, Trustees, volunteers and members of the Guild who engage in online conversations or share content via social networks. It also informs the social media guidance issued to volunteers such as society officers and student representatives.

2.4 This policy applies to social media communications made at any time, whether privately or publicly, and from anywhere, including away from campus and on personal devices, whether to an individual, to a limited group or to the world.

2.5 It applies to use of social media accounts that are used as part of the Guild activity, as well as personal social media accounts which can identify the owner as being an employee, volunteer or member of the Guild.

3 Principles

3.1 Social networking is a big part of our everyday life and an important way of connecting with our members and showcasing our work across the sector and beyond. When used properly, it can be a valuable part of our research and insight into student priorities. It is also a useful transparency and communication tool, so we encourage our staff team and Officers to take advantage of it.

3.2 Whilst we encourage the responsible use of social media, we recognise that any personal social media account which can identify a person as being associated to the Guild also has the potential to harm our professional reputation.

3.3 Individuals are personally responsible for what they communicate on or through social media and they must adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in this policy and any related policies.

3.4 The Guild is committed to inclusion, so when interacting with people via social media, we respect their views and lived experiences, and treat people online with the same respect and understanding as anyone we meet in person.

3.5   Communications on social media must be respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Use of social media must not infringe on the rights, dignity or privacy of other employees, volunteers or members.

3.6   Any misuse of social media will be investigated as part of the Guild's Disciplinary Procedures and may be treated as misconduct.

3.7   This policy does not intend to limit freedom of speech, subject to that freedom being used in ways that do not breach the law and/or the Guild's policies or by-laws.

4   Responsibilities

4.1   All employees, volunteers and members are responsible for:

- ensuring that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies;
- gaining permission from the appropriate staff member(s) before creating an account using the Guild's name and logo;
- regularly monitoring, updating and managing the content they have posted;
- ensuring that posts made do not threaten, harass or bully anyone within or outside of the Guild community;
- reporting any incidents or concerns to an appropriate staff member.

5   Advice and Reporting

5.1   If you have any questions, require advice or support, and/or would like to report any breaches or concerns regarding this policy, you can contact an appropriate member of Guild staff as follows:

- Employees should contact the Head of Marketing and Brand;
- Society Members and Volunteers should contact the Society President or a member of the Activities Team.
- Student Reps should contact a member of the Voice Team.
- Members of the Guild should contact the Head of Marketing and Brand with questions or follow the complaints procedure to report any breaches or concerns.

6   Guidelines for the responsible use of social media

6.1   Employees, volunteers and members who have a social media presence that refers to the Guild should ensure that it is clear they are speaking in a personal capacity. You should not declare, imply or indicate that your content or views are representative of those of the Guild.

6.2   The presence of a disclaimer such as "*The views I express are mine alone and do not reflect the views of Exeter Students' Guild*" will not necessarily mean that disciplinary action cannot be taken. We may request the removal of content if it is deemed to pose a risk to one of our employees, volunteers or members, or our reputation.

6.3   'Liking', 'sharing', 'retweeting' or any other activity that could be seen to endorse social media content that breaches this or any other Guild policies may be regarded in the same way as if the individual had posted the content.

6.4 Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications through social media, which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.

6.5 Social media must not be used to verbally abuse or intimidate staff, members, volunteers or members of the public. Respect should be shown at all times for other people's privacy and feelings. Care should be taken to avoid language which may be deemed as offensive to others. For example, you should not:

- Say anything that is or could be construed as discriminatory;
- Engage in any criminal activity;
- Make untrue or misleading statements;
- Post inappropriate pictures or videos;
- Like, share or retweet any content that includes the above.

6.6 Before posting photographs, videos or details of another person you must obtain their consent.

6.7 Employees must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about the Guild, its staff, members or volunteers, the University, suppliers, commercial partners or other stakeholders, as this can damage our business reputation either directly or indirectly.

6.8 If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from posting it until you have discussed it with the appropriate staff member.

6.9 The use of social media channels and other forms of digital communication to bully or harass others, or the posting of inappropriate content that compromises the professional reputation of the Guild may result in disciplinary action.

6.10 You must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance, or do anything to jeopardise confidential information or intellectual property. You must not include the Guild's brand in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media unless authorised to do so by the Head of Marketing and Brand.

6.11 Guild accounts should not be used to promote or endorse a product unless otherwise agreed by the Head of Marketing and Brand or the Chief Executive.

6.12 If you are contacted for comments for publication anywhere, including social media, the enquiry should be directed to press-enquiries@exeterguild.com.

6.13 Content should not be posted without the permission of the person that created it.

6.14 Social media should not be used to gather personal and sensitive data, and/or to share information about other staff, students, clients or customers in line with our data protection and privacy policies.

6.15 Any misuse of social media should be reported to an appropriate staff member.

6.16 For support in positively engaging with members via social media, including details of training, support materials and workshops, please speak to a member of the Communications and Marketing team.

7 The Guild's Social Media Accounts

7.1 Our logo should be used on official SU online channels which are associated with the Guild. This includes student groups, societies, volunteer groups or social media networks established by student representatives.

7.2 Employees and members should be aware that they are representing the Guild when posting comments, liking, sharing or responding to comments made by others on social media.

7.3 If an employee or member needs to create an official Guild social media account, they should contact the Head of Marketing and Brand in the first instance for approval and guidance. This will ensure that agreed accounts are recorded appropriately and that they adhere to naming, brand and visual identity guidelines/protocols.

7.4 Any social media accounts used for official purposes should be linked to an @exeterguild.com email address and the log-in details must be provided to the Communications and Marketing team. All engagement with our members via social media regarding any Guild activities must be through this account, unless expressly authorised by the Head of Marketing and Brand.

7.5 Accounts established for official Guild purposes remain the property of the Students' Guild. Correct, up-to-date log-in details must be shared with the Communications and Marketing Team at all times. Upon leaving the organisation, the account will be reassigned or deleted. You should therefore ensure that the account is removed from your personal devices and that any personal details are removed.

8 Abusive behaviour

8.1 We want all those working for and representing the Guild to enjoy being praised on social media when they achieve great things. As a representative body, we do accept that our members may also criticise the Guild from time to time, and will always seek to learn from polite, constructive feedback.

8.2 We will not accept, tolerate or engage with:

- Threatening or abusive communications from people who do not agree with our work or approach;
- Those working for or representing the Guild being personally attacked because of their gender, race, religion, disability, or any other identifying factor;
- Comments being directed to personal social media accounts (i.e., accounts not belonging to the Guild) of those working for or representing the Guild;
- Abusive communications via anonymous platforms.

8.3 If you are on the receiving end of such abuse, either due to being named directly or because you are monitoring an official Guild social media account, you should not respond. We do however acknowledge that this can still be distressing, and the Guild is committed to supporting you in dealing with online abuse.

8.4 If the message is unpleasant but not threatening, and is about work you or the Guild has done, you may wish to respond to ask the person to provide constructive feedback either directly or via our member feedback channels. If the person then continues to be unpleasant or becomes abusive, do not continue the conversation, and instead move to the suggestion below.

8.5 If a message feels threatening or abusive, do not respond to it. Instead, you should forward it to a member of the Guild Senior Management Team. They will take appropriate action and keep you updated about what they're doing.

8.6 All those working for or representing the Guild should know that there is support available to them when they face online abuse, and should speak to their line manager or a member of the senior management team who can signpost them to the relevant support organisations and help them to access tailored support depending on the situation. All line-managers will be provided with guidance on how to support employees in these situations.

9 Anonymous Platforms

9.1 The use of anonymous online platforms for the purpose of the bullying, discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of others or to discredit the Guild, its staff or members is regarded as gross misconduct in our members' code of conduct.

9.2 Those working for or representing the Guild must not respond to or engage with abusive comments made via anonymous platforms, and must report them to a member of the senior management team. A record will be made and the Guild may seek to further investigate reports of anonymous abuse, as well as share information with the University and the police where necessary.

10 Compliance with Guild Policies

10.1 Social media must never be used in a way that violates any other Guild policies, by-laws or obligations relating to employees, volunteers or members.

10.2 Please refer to the Employee Handbook and the Member Code of Conduct for further details.

11 Monitoring

11.1 The Guild will monitor official Guild social media accounts and we will request the removal of any content deemed to be in breach of this policy.

11.2 We will also monitor references to the organisation online and will act where necessary to protect our reputation.

11.3 Social media sites may be referred to when investigating breaches or complaints under this policy.

12 Breach of this policy

12.1 Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

12.2 Any disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the procedures outlined in the disciplinary procedure for employees and in our disciplinary procedure for members / volunteers.

12.3   You may be asked to remove content from either an official Guild account and/or from a personal account if we find that it breaches this or any other Guild policies. Failure to comply with a request to remove content may also result in disciplinary action.

12.4   Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of when a breach is committed and regardless of whether any Guild equipment or facilities were used in posting the content.

12.5   Any content on social media that breaches this policy should be reported to the [appropriate staff member](#).