



NSPCC's Social Media Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out how we can all use social media to celebrate our achievements, raise awareness and encourage fundraising, while also setting out the boundaries within which we expect staff and volunteers to operate.

The policy covers topics such as sharing political opinions and other views, how to deal with trolls*, connecting with people working at partners or agencies, child protection responsibilities and dealing with abusive behaviour online. The policy also sets out your responsibilities in safeguarding children, adults at risk and vulnerable adults. Additionally, it explains what happens if you are found to have breached it in some way.

It is important we all follow this policy while we are online, professionally or personally, in order to minimise any reputational and/or other damage to us individually and as an organisation and to protect ourselves from abusive behaviour online. It is important to consider what you are posting, even when using private social media accounts, ensuring that anything we post does not conflict with or undermine the organisation's work and values. Nothing should be posted that could bring the NSPCC into disrepute.

Social networks are invaluable in connecting us with colleagues, reaching out to other professional networks, fundraising, and spreading positive messages about how we are there for every childhood. The NSPCC has its own presence on many social media channels, and we encourage you to connect with us on these networks. Our people are best placed to share our official messages, but you must do so within the boundaries of this policy.

1. Who this policy is applicable to

This policy is applicable to all employees, casual/sessional workers, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and trustees.

2. Principles

Many people use social media platforms personally and to promote their work and to network. Here are the basic principles of this policy.

- We respect your right to create and actively use social media platforms of your choice.
- Always be kind, courteous and respectful of others and act in a manner that is in keeping with our values and behaviours, and our Safeguarding code of conduct and policy on appropriate professional boundaries policy, online, as you would do in the offline world.

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- We trust you to make good judgements about what you say and write about the NSPCC and Childline, in and outside of work. We acknowledge that some of you might want to use your social media profiles to talk about the organisation and the work that we do, and you might want to publicly let people know you volunteer here (with consideration of the posts you might share about the NSPCC's work and values).
- We trust you to treat people with respect on social media, and not to troll people on the platforms.
- You should turn on your privacy settings to help protect you from abusive behaviour online and keeps things you're sharing to a smaller pool of people. You can find your privacy settings in the settings menu on each platform - if you need guidance on how to do this please contact the social media team at socialmedia@nspcc.org.uk
- What you share online is public, even if you've set your profiles to private, so always consider this before sharing. Ask yourself if the post could be perceived as being in conflict with the NSPCC's work or its values. If you have any doubts, don't share and seek internal advice from the social media team
- Do not post anything relating to your colleagues, supporters, suppliers or other stakeholders without their express permission.
- Never share your personal contact details, either take the conversation to direct messages or provide a generic email address and respond from there.
- Make clear in your bio, particularly if you state that you volunteer at the NSPCC, that any views you hold are your own, and not those shared by the NSPCC.

3. Using your personal social media to talk about the NSPCC

We do some amazing things at the NSPCC and we should be proud of them. Sharing all of this can be a really good way to help raise awareness and showcase what brilliant things we are doing. We regularly suggest posts and tweets for you to share about our campaigns and work, to give you an example of what to say about them.

Existing guidelines about NSPCC values inside and outside of work apply to your activity on social media. If you are worried that your opinion in the post may conflict with or undermine the NSPCC's work, or that you might be putting yourself or the organisation at risk, then don't share it.

Always think about what you are posting online (both personally and professionally) regarding the work that the NSPCC does. If you think it would bring the organisation into disrepute, could put a child or adult at risk, or you are unsure if it would, don't post it. You can always speak to the social media team for advice.

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3.1 Politics and social media

As an organisation, we are politically neutral. We recognise that everyone has their own political beliefs and that some staff and volunteers may be more active in politics than others. If you're using your personal social networks to promote your political beliefs or work, and it is on your profile that you volunteer for the NSPCC, you need to make it very clear in your bio that your views are solely your own, and separate from those of the NSPCC.

The NSPCC does not tolerate abusive language being used by or directed at NSPCC staff, volunteers and partners. This includes sexist, racist, ableist, classist, homophobic or transphobic language - or any commentary that runs counter to the Equality Act.

Each platform has their own standards to follow, please read Twitter's, Facebook's, Instagram's and LinkedIn's on their websites.

If people are messaging you about your political opinions or views and ask for comments in relation to NSPCC, please do not respond, direct them to the Media and PR team at media@nspcc.org.uk.

You can raise it with the social media team for advice.

3.2 People challenging your opinions or work

If someone scrutinises you on social media for the NSPCC's work, take a screengrab or picture and share with the social media team for guidance.

3.3 Adding and interacting with people working at partners or agencies

We would advise against interacting online with people working for our partners or external agencies. Such relationships should be kept on a strictly professional basis.

3.4 Safeguarding children, adults at risk/vulnerable adults

We all have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that children and adults are kept safe. If you come across anything online that could mean a child or adult is at risk, you need to report it as soon as possible.

How to do this:

- You must follow the Safeguarding allegations management procedure: what to do if you have concerns about a child procedure
- Make a note of the URL and take a screengrab/photo of the webpage or social media post you're concerned about
- Send this and any other details you can to help@nspcc.org.uk
- Inform your supervisor or volunteer manager

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- If you see content of a child or adult being hurt or upset, don't share it. Report it to the network. Guidelines on how to do this can be found on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- You must refer any urgent concerns about online content to the NSPCC helpline
- If you're unsure, you can contact the social media team for advice.

If you are concerned that a colleague poses a risk to a child or adult you must follow the Safeguarding allegations management procedure: what to do when you're concerned that a colleague poses a risk to children or adults.

Any sexual relationship with a service user is a serious breach of appropriate boundaries, and in some instances illegal and could lead to prosecution. This includes attempts to 'groom' or befriend a service user or to send/save a naked or explicit image or video of a child. Any sexual activity between an individual and a service user may constitute a criminal offence and will always be investigated in line with the NSPCC Managing Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers procedures and will also be a matter for disciplinary action. Staff and volunteers should not accept any service user aged under 18 as a friend or contact on their personal social media or online accounts. If a young person is persistent in trying to make contact please inform your supervisor or volunteer manager. If any inappropriate comments are received on your social networking sites by a child or young person, then your supervisor or volunteer manager should be informed. For further information please refer to the NSPCC safeguarding and child protection policy.

It is also inappropriate for an individual to discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of child/ren.

4. What to do if you are trolled or abused on social media?

If you're using social media and are obviously connected to the NSPCC (particularly if you are a spokesperson or speaking at events) you may experience abusive behaviour online. Take a moment away from the conversation, remain calm and don't respond in an angry or aggressive manner – particularly if the conversation relates to the NSPCC's work or policies. In most cases, it is best not to respond.

You can speak to the social media team any time for advice if you're experiencing trolling on social media.

If you see someone abusing NSPCC staff or volunteers online, please let the social media team know.

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5. What happens if you breach this policy?

Breaches of this policy can cause serious reputational and financial damage, undermine the work we are doing and affect our capacity to raise awareness of our work, can put children and adults at risk, as well as impacting on our ability to raise funds.

If there is suspected breach of this policy, it will be investigated and treated seriously. It could ultimately lead to the end of your volunteering.

6. Further information and related policies

If you want advice or guidance, email socialmedia@nspcc.org.uk

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- NSPCC values and behaviours
- Safeguarding code of conduct and Policy on appropriate professional boundaries
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Safeguarding allegations management procedure: what to do if you have concerns about a child
- Safeguarding allegations management procedure: what to do when you're concerned that a colleague poses a risk to children or adults

**Social Media Terminology*

Troll - A troll is someone who posts unkind or offensive messages on social media sites, and often tries to start arguments with other users. The social team will share a blog post to break down other social media 'buzzwords'.

Fake news – A form of news consisting of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional news media (print and broadcast) or social media.

Doxxing – To search for and publish private or identifying information about a particular individual online, typically with malicious intent.

Astrourfing – The practice of masking the sponsors of a message or organisation (e.g. political, advertising, religious or public relations) to make it appear as though it originates from and is supported by grassroots participants.

Cancel culture – This is a form of boycott whereby an offending party, whether actual or perceived, is effectively 'cancelled' from participating in their professional sphere.

Surge comms – A form of online activism whereby online commentators create a surge in negative noise by hijacking a particular conversation.

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