



*Developing young people through
personal challenge*

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media proves to be useful for engaging with young people in youth work practice. Online engagement is often accompanied by fear around boundaries. However, fundamentally, the fears/risks surrounding social media use are similar to those encountered in everyday youth work, and can be overcome by applying the same ethical principles.

The main risks are:

- 1) Youth Worker 'hearing' things about young people, mainly through news feeds
- 2) The young person feeling that the youth worker is violating their privacy
- 3) The youth worker being 'on shift' with young people outside of work hours
- 4) Informality confusing young people about boundaries
- 5) Young people sharing personal information to volunteers
- 6) Witnessing safeguarding incidents
- 7) Safeguarding disclosures
- 8) Misinterpretation of language, including symbols and abbreviations by young people and parents/carers

Managing these risks:

In practice, a thorough risk assessment will be carried out for work with young people. The same applies online. By following simple steps these online risks can be managed. Before joining any new social media sites, the Project Director will assess the risk and modify this social media policy accordingly.

Volunteer behaviour guidelines

When using social media, volunteers must maintain professional communication. Language must be managed in the same way that it would be when working directly with young people and the volunteer's role is always to be a positive role model.

If volunteers wish to set up a professional Facebook profile it must be separate to their personal profile.

Volunteers must make it clear to young people that accounts are professional profiles and if young people make contact with volunteers regarding anything outside their project work, then they should reply to explain that they are only able to discuss work related issues.

Facebook

For general Facebook use:

Any young person who approaches you on your personal profile must be declined and a personal message can be sent outlining why you cannot add them. You can point them towards your work profile.

- Volunteers are discouraged from 'friending' fellow colleagues, although this can be done at their discretion
- Links between professional and private profiles should not be made, for example, YoCO Facebook accounts will not 'friend' personal accounts.
- Volunteers must avoid any discussions about personal matters about themselves and the young people that they are interacting with.
- Volunteers will not 'trawl' through young peoples' news feed looking for information. Volunteers will 'unfollow' young people that they are friends with to avoid their information appearing in their newsfeed.
- Volunteers will not tag young people in posts or photographs
- The same language that you would use face to face with young people is appropriate online. For example, do not include 'x' on any of your messages and use no terms of endearment such as 'hun' and no abbreviation or text talk such as 'lol'. Emoji's such as '☺' should be used with caution as they can be misinterpreted
- Do not 'like' or comment on young peoples' posts or news feeds with the exception of post and comments that mention or contains a tag of the clubs or groups name or names projects or staff.
- Do not ask young people about information that you have seen online
- Volunteers should change their password at least every two months and send this password to the Project Director (This is only for professional pages not personal ones).
- When sending private messages, include another volunteer where appropriate. Volunteers can engage in private messages in a professional capacity only. Under no circumstances should volunteers delete message correspondence with young people.

Facebook account

- Volunteers should not friend young people, they should inform young people of their account and this will enable the young people to make a decision as to whether they want to friend staff from YoCO. When telling young people about their Facebook account, volunteers should be clear that this is a professional account and advise the young person to limit what they enable volunteers to see via their own privacy settings.
- If a young person engages you in a personal conversation that is more than 'small talk' you must state the 'confidentiality statement' as you would in a face to face setting with young people

- Contact with young people via Facebook should be treated with the same level of vigilance as your face to face work. Any concerns or issues that arise should be discussed with your Project Director.
- Settings must be set to ensure that ‘timeline and tagging’ activity is always reviewed by volunteers before posts appear on their timeline.

Facebook Page

Projects can set up a page to advertise their projects, but the activity on these pages must be checked regularly. Pages are set up for promoting projects and sharing information only. Young people can like the page and write comments on the wall once they have been reviewed by the page manager.

- One person must be designated as the page manager and 2 others should have access to the page as administrators to ensure that at least three people have page admin access.
- In settings, ensure that ‘Posting Ability’ is set so that volunteers review all posted before they appear on the page. Comments deemed inappropriate will be removed.
- In settings, ensure that the ‘Profanity Filter’ is set to ‘strong’
- No young people will be tagged in posts on a page. The page manager will ensure that ‘Tagging Ability’ settings for the page will be set so that only page managers can tag in posts.
- Photographs may be posted with the aim of promoting projects but you must have the permission for their photographs to be used in this way and volunteers will not tag young people. If the young person is under the age of 18, parental consent is required. For those over the age of 18, volunteers can obtain oral consent. Always ensure that the photo subjects are aware that their image will be posted onto the club or groups Social Media outlets.

Facebook group

This may be set up by volunteers only for a specific group of young people that you are currently working with. The aim for this group is for members to update each other on progress towards a goal, information sharing and planning events.

- Only work Facebook accounts can be attached to this group
- Once you have finished working with that group of young people, you must remove yourself from this group
- Volunteers can engage in private messages in a professional capacity only
- If a young person engages you in a personal conversation that is more than ‘small talk’ you must state the ‘confidentiality statement’ as you would in a face to face setting with young people
- Photographs of the group may be shared within the group with young people’s permission

Twitter

- Photographs may be posted with the aim of promoting projects but you must have the permission for their photographs to be used in this way. If the young person is under the age of 18, parental consent is required. For those over the age of 18, staff can obtain oral consent. Always ensure that the photo subjects are aware that their image will be posted onto club or groups Social Media outlets.

- The group or club will not tag (@) young people in posts via Twitter

Whatsapp

- A group Whatsapp may be set up to allow easy communication between the group. It should be managed by one of the group leaders, the Projecy Director's YoCO number must be included and all the messages must be appropriate for the whole group. If a young person does not use the correct language they must be removed from the group.

Cyber Bullying

Please refer to the Oxfordshire County Council Cyber Bullying Toolkit

http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/antibullying/cyberbullying/Oxfordshire_Cyberbullying_Toolkit.pdf

For more information, Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest have thorough help pages that are full of information about security and privacy. <https://support.twitter.com/> <https://www.facebook.com/help>

<https://help.pinterest.com/en/articles>

This policy was adopted at the Board of Trustees Meeting on; 27th February 2018

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Trustees Jane Cranston (Chairman)

Date for review; Feb 2019