



Poynton Players Social Media Policy

Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the collective term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create, share and interact with content (words, images, graphics and video content), as well as network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.

Why do we use social media and what can we use it for?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Poynton Players' work. It is important for designated members to participate in social media to engage with our audiences, contribute to relevant conversations, and raise the profile of Poynton Players, using the charity's accounts. Some members may also support Poynton Players by using their personal accounts, and many will have social media accounts for personal use.

Building an engaged online community can lead to more significant long-term support and involvement from supporters. [Social media guidance from the Charity Commission](#) (September 2023) conveys how social media can be a highly effective way for Poynton Players to engage with its audiences and communicate about its work.

Social media helps us to:

- Promote our campaigns
- Share our news and updates with our audiences
- Engage in important conversations with stakeholders
- Celebrate our successes
- Raise awareness of important issues and challenges
- Advertise job and volunteering opportunities

- Support our fundraising activities
- Increase our membership
- Build an online supportive community
- Raise our public profile and strengthen our reputation
- React to quickly changing situations and topics

Why do we need a social media policy?

Social media is a fast-moving online world, where nuance and context can be easily lost. While social media brings Poynton Players to a wide audience, it can also present risks. We want to ensure that all members using social media represent and reflect Poynton Players in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks (such as reputational or legal issues) associated with the use of social media to protect our supporters and members, work and reputation.

While we encourage the use of social media to support our communications strategy or plans, we have important standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe and adhere to. The difference between a personal and professional opinion can also be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to Poynton Players work. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations and is subject to the same laws as other kinds of publication or commentary in the public domain.

Failure to comply with this policy could expose Poynton Players to reputational damage as well as putting members at risk.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.

Participation in social media on behalf of Poynton Players 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. Members who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the committee

Setting out the social media policy

Application

This policy applies to all social media platforms used by members (including trustees) in a professional and personal capacity.

This policy also applies to online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone. This policy applies to the use of all such devices.

Point of contact for social media and authority to post on Poynton Players' social media accounts

Our publicity sub-committee is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels, please speak to the main committee. No other member is permitted to post content on Poynton Players' official channels without the permission of the committee

Which social media channels do we use?

Poynton Players uses the following social media channels:

- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/poyntonplayers/>
- X <https://x.com/PoyntonPlayers>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/poyntonplayers/>

Poynton Players has social media accounts listed above which it uses to share news with members and prospective audiences and to encourage people to become involved in our Society

Policy ownership

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

Rules for use: headlines

Code of conduct headlines

- I will not insult, harass, bully or intimidate individuals or organisations
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will not do anything that breaches my voluntary role
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly using provided guidance
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- I will be considerate, kind and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm to the organisation or to others
- I will champion Poynton Players and its services

Rules for use: full list

Using Poynton Players' social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Know our social media guardians

The publicity sub-committee is responsible for setting up and managing Poynton Players' social media channels. The Committee has overall ownership of these accounts and only those authorised to do so by the committee will have access to these accounts.

The Publicity Sub-committee will uphold best practices for channel security with secure passwords that regularly change. Never give out the passwords for our channels

2. Be an ambassador for our brand

Members must ensure they reflect Poynton Players' values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Please note only the Publicity Sub-committee or main Committee are permitted to respond to comments on our social media posts on behalf of the organisation. All posts and comments should be attributed to the charity and not an individual. In special cases it may be appropriate for a member to make an individual comment as themselves, but this should be under the supervision, and with the approval, of the main Committee

4. Ensure brand consistency

Members must not create or manage any other social media channels, groups or pages on behalf of Poynton Players without express permission from the main Committee. This is to ensure brand consistency for users and the appropriate safeguarding and monitoring processes are in place.

5. Remember the bigger picture and focus on the benefit

Members must make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Poynton Players to further our charitable purposes

6. Bring value to our audience(s)

Those responsible for the management of our social media accounts should answer questions as swiftly as possible to help and engage with our service users and supporters.

7. Seek permission to share

If members outside of the publicity sub-committee wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should obtain guidance and permission from the main Committee.

8. Obtain consent

Members must not post content about supporters, service users or partners without their, or their guardian's, express permission. If staff or and volunteers are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from Poynton Players. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff and volunteers must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

9. Put safety first

It is vital that Poynton Players does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials in pursuit of social media engagement. For example, a video of a stunt or visiting an unsafe location.

10. Stick to the law

Members must 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.

11. Remain politically neutral

Poynton Players is not associated with any political organisation or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We can express views where appropriate on policies that impact our work and service users, but it is essential that Poynton Players remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

We cannot endorse a political party or candidate. We must carefully manage the risk that we are perceived to have any party-political bias and should carefully consider any posts which might be perceived as such, for example, posts which talk about individual politicians or parties rather than policies.

12. Check facts and be honest

Members should not automatically assume that material that's shared or included in any post is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification – for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. But think first about how to manage any risk to the charity and its brand in doing so by consulting with the main Committee to craft the response.

13. Seek advice for complaints

If a complaint is made on Poynton Players' social media channels, members should seek advice from the main Committee before responding.

14. Know what to do in a crisis

If any members outside of the Publicity sub-committee or main Committee becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Poynton Players' social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the main Committee immediately. It is the responsibility of all members to report complaints or comments that could escalate into a crisis or have serious implications for Poynton Players

16. Use AI appropriately

AI can be a valuable tool that can support our communications activities. However, members must seek permission from the main Committee before using AI and only use approved AI tools and processes.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

Personal social media use by members can sometimes be attributed to the charity or bring other risks for the charity or individual staff or volunteers. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media, but instead flags up those areas in which risks or conflicts might arise. Poynton Players members are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are considerate of Poynton Players' values and policies, both online and in real life.

Defamation

Defamation is when a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published in print (such as in media publications) or online (such as Instagram Story, Facebook Live, Snapchat post).

Whether members are posting content on social media as part of their role or in a personal capacity, they should not bring Poynton Players 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, when representing Poynton Players. 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 members make must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Poynton Players is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date, or information from people who the charity has worked with which is private.

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 Poynton Players 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.

Accessibility

In line with Poynton Players equity, diversity and inclusion policy we endeavour to ensure our social media is as accessible as possible. This includes:

- Using plain English, accessible fonts and avoiding small text sizes
- Using contrasting colours
- Using subtitles where appropriate
- Using alt text for videos and images
- Explaining text contained in an image in the copy that accompanies it
- Following our brand guidelines [link] which have been designed to be accessible.

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 Committee 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 or radicalisation. Where known, when communicating with vulnerable or young people under 18-years-old via social media, members should ensure the online relationship with Poynton Players follows the same rules as offline.

Members should be aware that children under the age of 13 should not be encouraged to create their own personal social media accounts or engage with others and are not legally allowed to use social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram or X.

Members should ensure that vulnerable and young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security and privacy settings as necessary. Members should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the vulnerable or young person and Poynton Players content and other content is appropriate for them.

All members have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that vulnerable and young people are kept safe from harm. If you come across anything online that could mean someone is at risk, you should contact the main Committee.

Engaging on emotive topics

Poynton Players may be involved in issues that provoke strong emotions. The emotive content we share via our social media channels can engage our audiences and help us achieve our communications goals. However, it is important to plan appropriately and consider potential reputational risks to the charity.

Related policies, laws and guidance

- Data Management & Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
- Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy
- Staff wellbeing and safeguarding procedures

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed one year after being introduced and then every three years or in response to significant new legislation by the Committee and amended as appropriate.

Date Created	Review Due	Review Completed	Reviewer
3 rd September 2024			Steve Heritage
	1 st September 2025		
	1 st September 2028		

