

Social Media Policy

Elton Youth Hub recognises that staff, committee, trustees, helpers, young leaders, and young people have greater access to social media than ever before. Whilst 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. This policy does not aim to curb freedom of speech, nor to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship between all parties, whether internally or externally.

What are the risks?

1. Risk of team member 'hearing' things about young people and/or their family, mainly through a news feed.
2. Risk of young person/family feeling like the youth work team are violating their privacy.
3. Risk of the youth work team being 'on shift' with young people outside of 'working' hours.
4. Risk of informality confusing young people about boundaries.
5. Risk of young people sharing personal information with team members.
6. Risk of witnessing safeguarding incidents.
7. Risk of safeguarding disclosures. 8. Risk of misinterpretation of language, including symbols and abbreviations by young people, parents, and carers.

These guidelines cover all social media platforms – the places online where people can have a dialogue or contribute content. These include:

- Social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Snap chat, Instagram)
- Video and photo sharing websites (Flickr, Youtube, Tick Tock)
- Micro-blogging sites (Twitter)
- Blogs (including corporate or personal blogs)
- Forums and discussion boards (Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups)
- Online encyclopaedias (Wikipedia)
- Geo-location services (Facebook Place, Gowalla, Forsquare)

As these technologies are constantly evolving, this policy will be updated regularly. Team members should keep themselves up to date with any changes.

Member confidentiality

Disclose only publicly available information. Never talk about confidential organisational or member information on social media. If in doubt, do not post it. Ask for clarification.

Transparency

If you are talking about something The Hub, a client, or similar is doing publicly, you must be transparent and disclose your relationship to the club.

Designated Expert

If you are positioning yourself as an expert on either The Hub or personal social media account but wishing to state you are from The Hub, you must discuss this with the Youth Leader, Chair, or a Trustee. If you receive media enquiries for comment on your subject of expertise, you must refer this before you can comment notable if you are likely to refer to your position at the Hub.

Kickbacks and Gifts

Never talk about a product or organisation in exchange for cash. If you have received a product or service to review, you must disclose it in your post or review and have approval of the Chair or a Trustee.

How do we manage these risks?

A thorough risk assessment is carried out for your work with young people. The same applies online. By following simple steps you will be managing these online risks.

Behaviour Guidelines

When using social media for The Hub purposes, team members should maintain professional communication. Language should be managed in the same way that would be when working directly with young people and their families. Your role is to always be a positive role model. Never use language that is, or could be perceived as, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or organisation.

Plagiarism

Always refer to the sources of work if you are quoting directly from them. Do not be afraid of quoting or RT (re-tweeting) information but never take credit for others' work. Respect copyright, privacy, and other laws.

Facebook

- Team members should make it clear that The Hub accounts are professional profiles and contact via these will receive only work related replies. In so far as is possible, the use of social media chats (i.e.: Facebook messenger) should be limited with signposting to email addresses in order to keep clearer paper trails of communications.
- Any young person who approaches you on your personal profile must be declined. A message can be sent outlining why you cannot add them. Direct them to the KYC accounts.
- Any parent/carer who approaches you on your personal profile must be treated with caution and only accepted if you understand the potential risk (i.e.: able to see all your future posts). There is a fine line when parents are also on the committee but this is generally left to individual team members to use their judgement. Team members must avoid youth club discussions on personal accounts if it is of a personal nature. It is appreciated that quick contact and sharing of content is often easiest via a messenger service however.
- Team members must not trawl through young peoples' news feed looking for information and should unfriend members that they are friends with to avoid their information appearing in their newsfeed.
- Young people must NOT be tagged in posts or photographs and names only used in line with GDPR consent form replies.
- The same language used face to face with young people is usually the most appropriate online. Do not include an 'x', use terms of endearment such as 'hun/honey', no abbreviations or text talk such as 'lol' (laugh out loud or lots of love), and be wary of emojis that can be misinterpreted
- Do not 'like' or comment on young people's posts or news feeds with the exception of posts and comments that relate to Kennington Youth Club.
- Do not ask young people about information you have seen online.
- Facebook is not a main form of contact. Email comes first and is where the majority of communications should be sent from.
- Messages, especially where contact with young people has occurred, should not be deleted under any circumstances.

Twitter/Instagram

- There will be one central account only for the club and team members are not permitted to hold their own twitter account for the club.
- No tagging of young people is permitted.
- Photographs must only be posted with the permission of parent/carers as per GDPR consent forms.



Cyberbullying

The Hub does not tolerate any form of cyberbullying. Please refer to other policies for relevant information.

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee: Name.....

Chairperson Signature.....

Date.....

Name..... Youth Leader

Signature.....

Date.....

