



Social Media Policy

This policy has been adopted by Highfield Park Trust

Date Ratified: May 2024

Review Date: May 2025

Signed: *T Abbott*

Position: Chair of Trustees

This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and updates will be placed on our website.

A guide for staff and Trustees using social media to promote the work of Highfield Park Trust and in a personal capacity.

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Highfield Park Trust's work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of Highfield Park Trust's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to Highfield Park Trust's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all staff members of all levels, volunteers, and trustees, and applies to content posted on both a Highfield Park Trust device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of Highfield Park Trust, and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the Highfield Park Trust office. You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during your lunch breaks. But usage should not be excessive and interfere with your duties.

Point of contact for social media

Our Highfield Park Trust Administration and Finance Officer is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, then please speak to the officer.

Which social media channels do we use?

Highfield Park Trust uses the following social media channels:

Twitter @HighfieldParkTr
Used for short updates to St Albans local area.

Facebook Group Highfield Park St Albans
One of the main focuses for social media updates of Highfield Helpers, Events, weekly updates from the park. It is also used by members of the private group to contact the Trust although the emphasis has been on the site being run by volunteers.

are in doubt about Highfield Park Trust's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Chief Executive.

13. It is vital that Highfield Park Trust does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
14. Staff should 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.
15. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Highfield Park Trust. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, we can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.
16. Highfield Park Trust is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.
17. If a complaint is made on Highfield Park Trust's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the Chief Executive before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the Chairman.
18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.
19. The Administration and Finance Officer regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of Highfield Park Trust so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the Administration and Finance Officer will contact the Chief Executive or the Chairman of the Board.
20. If any staff become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Highfield Park Trust's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Administration and Finance Officer immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Highfield Park Trust staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with Highfield Park Trust's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Highfield Park Trust. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Highfield Park Trust.
2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at Highfield Park Trust should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Chief Executive. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for Highfield Park Trust should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Chief Executive.

3. Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing Highfield Park Trust's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Highfield Park Trust and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself.
5. Highfield Park Trust works with several high profile people, including politicians, members of the council and film crew. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by Highfield Park Trust. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.
6. If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the Chief Executive to share the details.
7. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to Highfield Park Trust, they should talk to the Chief Executive immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
8. Highfield Park Trust is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing Highfield Park Trust, staff are expected to hold Highfield Park Trust's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from Highfield Park Trust and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
9. Never use [Highfield Park Trust's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Chief Executive.
10. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely.
11. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.
12. We encourage staff to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Highfield Park Trust and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Chief Executive who will respond as appropriate.

Further Guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring *Highfield Park Trust* into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. 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 staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Highfield Park Trust is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Highfield Park Trust 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

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the Chief Executive.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Remuneration Committee within the associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through the Chief Executive. Vacancies are shared routinely on LinkedIn and our social media sites.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision.

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 staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Chief Executive 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.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with Highfield Park Trust follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Highfield Park Trust content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of Highfield Park Trust is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our HR *policy* for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Chief Executive.