



The Milestone Society

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for honorary officers, committee members, advisors and trustees on using social media to promote the work of The Milestone Society

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 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.

1.2 Why do we use social media?

Social media is part of the success in communicating The Milestone Society's work. It is important for us to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of The Milestone Society's work.

1.3 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 The Milestone Society'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 honorary officers, committee members, advisors and trustees and applies to content posted on a personal device.

1.4 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 The Milestone Society. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help support our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

1.5 Point of contact for social media

Our Web Administrator 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, contact webadmin@milestonesociety.co.uk.

1.6 Which social media channels do we use?

The Milestone Society has a Facebook account <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MilestoneSociety> which it uses to share news with members and to encourage people to become involved in our work.

2. GUIDELINES

2.1 Using The Milestone Society's social media channels — appropriate conduct

- a) The Web Administrator is responsible for setting up and managing The Milestone Society's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Web Administrator will have access to these accounts.
- b) Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for The Milestone Society, and accurately reflects The Milestone Society's agreed position.
- c) Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
- d) Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
- e) Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
- f) You shouldn't post content about members without their express permission. If sharing information about members or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from The Milestone Society. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, you must ensure you have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
- g) Always check facts. You should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
- h) Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
- i) You should refrain from offering personal opinions via The Milestone Society's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about The Milestone Society's position on a particular issue, please speak to the chairman or vice-chair.
- j) It is vital that The Milestone Society does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
- k) You 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.
- l) You should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of The Milestone Society. By having official social media accounts in place we can ensure consistency and focus on building a strong following.
- m) The Milestone Society 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.
- n) If a complaint is made on The Milestone Society's social media channels, you should seek advice from the Web Administrator before responding. If they are not available, then you should speak to the Chairman. Please refer to our Complaint Handling Policy for further details.
- o) Sometimes issues can arise on social media which because they are sensitive 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.

The Web Administrator regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of The Milestone Society so we can catch any issues or problems early. If you become aware of any comments online that you think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on The Milestone Society's social media channels or elsewhere, you should speak to the Web Administrator immediately. If they are not available, then you should speak to the Chairman.

2.2 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. You are expected to behave appropriately online, and in ways that are consistent with The Milestone Society's policies.

a) Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive The Milestone Society. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of The Milestone Society. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about The Milestone Society's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent The Milestone Society's positions, policies or opinions."

b) Where you are well known in your field of expertise, you must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing The Milestone Society's view.

c) Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with The Milestone Society and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself.

d) If you are contacted by the press about your social media posts that relate to The Milestone Society, advise that they should talk to the Chairman and under no circumstances respond directly.

e) The Milestone Society is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. If you are politically active you need to be clear in separating your personal political identity from The Milestone Society, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

f) Never use The Milestone Society's logo unless approved to do so in line with our Use of the Society Logo policy and External Communications Policy.

g) 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.

h) 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.

i) We encourage you 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 The Milestone Society 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 Web Administrator who will respond as appropriate.

3. FURTHER GUIDELINES

3.1 Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether honorary officers, committee members, advisors and trustees are posting content on social media as part of their role or in a personal capacity, they should not bring The Milestone Society into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

3.2 Copyright law

It is critical that all honorary officers, committee members, advisors and trustees 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.

3.3 Confidentiality

Any communications that honorary officers, committee members, advisors and trustees make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that The Milestone Society is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

3.4 Discrimination and harassment

Honorary officers, committee members, advisors and trustees should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on The Milestone Society social media channel. 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

3.5 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 Web Administrator immediately.

3.6 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 The Milestone Society follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

3.7 Responsibilities and beach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of The Milestone Society is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. Breaches of policy may be treated as a complaint and dealt with in line with our Complaints Handling Policy. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Web Administrator.

3.8 Policy Review and Approval

The Society will review this policy at least every three years.

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