



## Social Media Policy

### **Policy Control**

Registered Charity Number: 1158413 | Registered in England & Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland

Version	Description	Date
1	Social Media	13/1/22
2	Social Media	25/1/22
Board Approved		5/5/22
For Review:		January 2024

## Introduction

This social media policy outlines the rules for using social media for foodbank purposes.

This policy sets out how staff and volunteers should behave when posting from the food bank’s social media accounts. It also outlines guidance for using personal social media accounts at the food bank, or with food bank-related content, and describes what staff and volunteers should and should not say about the food bank on social media.

### Why a Social Media Policy?

Social media can be an extremely useful tool when promoting the food bank as well as helping the charity to build relationships with its supporters and other organisations.

However, it is important that staff and volunteers who use social media within the food bank do so in a positive way that promotes the food bank’s important work.

A poorly worded status or comment can generate complaints, damage the food bank’s image, and possibly impact on the Trussell Trust’s reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to be aware of when engaging in this form of communication.

This policy will apply to all staff members and volunteers who use social media, for either food bank purposes or personal reasons. It also applies to off-site personal use that refers to, or relates to, the food bank and its activities.

It applies regardless of whether social media is being used on or off food bank premises.

## General social media guidelines

The following rules can help to avoid the most common social media errors, regardless of what platform food bank personnel use.

- **Understand the platform** – Staff and volunteers should spend time familiarising themselves with whichever social media platform they intend to use. It's important to read FAQs and understand what is and what is not acceptable on a social network site before posting.
- **If in doubt, don't post** – Staff and volunteers should remain cautious whilst on social media. It is important to remain professional, positive, and friendly at all times.
- **Remember where you're posting from** – You are representing your food bank so keep that in mind when sharing content. Your charity's reputation could be at stake if you post anything that is off topic or is personal. You should avoid expressing your personal opinions when writing on behalf of the food bank.
- **Don't let personal use interfere** – Although having staff and volunteers active on social media can be a useful tool for engaging with the wider public, individuals should exercise restraint in how often they use their personal social media accounts during food bank opening hours.
- **Handling complex enquiries** – Social media platforms are generally not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and sensitive personal issues. Once an individual has made contact, staff and volunteers should handle further communications through either telephone or email.
- **Keep calm** – Staff and volunteers should always take the time to think before responding, as it's easy to post a quick response to a confrontation status and then regret it later. Sometimes no answer is the best answer!

## Purpose of social media accounts

The food bank's social media accounts can be used for many different purposes.

In general, staff and volunteers should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when it aligns with the food bank's overall objectives.

For instance, food bank members may use social media accounts to:

- Respond to **enquiries** and **requests** for help
- Share **blog posts and articles** about your food bank or the work of the Trussell Trust
- Provide followers with an **insight into what goes on** at the food bank
- Promote **fundraising campaigns**
- Promote **new projects** and initiatives

Staff and volunteers should check with the Project Manager or Press and Communications Officer before using social media in a new way or prior to writing a post, particularly if the person hasn't used this platform for the food bank before.

### **Inappropriate content and uses**

Food bank social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate, unrelated, or personal content or to take part in any activities that could bring the food bank into controversy.

When sharing an interesting blog post or article, staff and volunteers should always read the piece thoroughly first and only post it if it's deemed to be relevant.

Food bank personnel must avoid becoming involved in a 'Party Political' debate or respond to posts which seem deliberately antagonistic.

### **Personal social media guidelines**

#### **Acceptable use:**

- Staff and volunteers may use their personal accounts for food bank-related purposes during regular hours but should ensure that it does not interfere with their regular duties.
- Use of social media accounts for purposes outside of the food bank should be contained to break times.

### **Talking about the foodbank**

- Staff and volunteers must ensure that their personal social media account makes clear that it contains personal thoughts and comments and does not represent the views or opinions of either the food bank or the Trussell Trust.
- Food bank personnel using their personal social media accounts to talk about the food bank should aim to include a disclaimer in their profiles, such as: *'All views our my own'* or *'The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of the food bank.'*

Consideration should always be given to whether personal social media comments could be used by others to damage the food bank's interests and reputation.

### **Responsible social media for food bank accounts**

#### **Users should not:**

- Create or transmit material that might be insulting or damage the food bank's reputation.
- Post messages, status updates or links to material that is inappropriate.

**Inappropriate content includes pornography, racial or religious slurs, profanity, sexist, bullying or harassing comments, information encouraging criminality or terrorism, material relating to gambling or illegal substances.**

**This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone based on race, sex, age, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by the law.**

- Use social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- Send offensive or harassing material to others.
- Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious, or other non-food bank related issues.
- Send or post messages or material that could damage the food bank's image and risk the reputation of the Trussell Trust.
- Interact with food bank critics in any ways which could be interpreted as offensive, disrespectful or rude.
- Discuss colleagues, volunteers, people visiting the food bank or supporters without their approval and consent.
- Post pictures of people visiting the food bank or their children without written consent.
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.
- Use social media to discuss or complain about personal or private issues.

## Copyright

Food banks must respect and operate within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to:

- Publish or share any copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, unless permitted by that third party.
- Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games, or other software.

If staff or volunteers wish to share content published on another website, they are free to do so only if that website enables sharing.

## Security and data protection

Staff and volunteers should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social media.

## Confidentiality

Users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the food bank that could be considered confidential or sensitive to the people visiting the food bank.
- Reveal the name of a person visiting the food bank or other information that could identify that person.
- Share content or information owned by another organisation or person that could be considered confidential or sensitive.
- Share or link to data in any way that could breach data protection policy.

### **Protect social media accounts**

Food bank social media accounts should be protected by a strong password and shared only with authorised users or volunteers. Further to this, staff or volunteers should not use a new piece of software or app with the food bank's social media accounts without the approval of the Project Manager.

### **Avoid social scams**

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant to 'phishing'. This is an attempt to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, or personal information. Phishing can involve sending malicious attachments or website links in an effort to infect computers or mobile devices. These links can often appear to be authentic and sent from legitimate organisations. Identities of individuals enquiring through social media should be verified first before any information is shared or discussed.

**IMPORTANT!** Food bank members should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Identities of people visiting the food bank must remain confidential and protected.

### **Policy Enforcement**

Food bank IT and internet resources, including computers, smart phones, and internet connections, are intended for legitimate food bank use.

The food bank's social media accounts should be monitored by users daily with responses to enquiries made within twenty-four to forty-eight hours if possible.

The Project Manager and/or a Trustee will aim to review social media accounts each week to ensure best practice is being adhered to by all users.

Staff and volunteers should be mindful that all data relating to social media which is sent or received through the food bank's computer system is part of the food bank's official records.

Knowingly breaching social media policy is a serious matter and employees and volunteers can be held personally liable for violating data protection and security laws. Staff members who breach confidentiality and data protection can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment with the food bank. Volunteers who breach the policy may not be permitted to offer their time and services at the food bank any longer.

### Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will take effect from 5/5/22 *Press and Communications Officer* has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Board of Trustees following its implementation and may be changed from time to time.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the Board of Trustees.