

## 1.1 Social Media

The Organisation is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way we operate. This includes using all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the different communities we serve.

'Social media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

These platforms open up many new and exciting opportunities. However, the practical application of such technology by the Organisation is continually developing and there are many potential issues to consider – both as individual employees and as a organisation.

To avoid major mistakes which could result in reputational, legal and ethical issues, and misuse/abuse of a well-functioning social media relationship, it is important that we **manage** any potential risks through a common-sense approach and framework as well as proactively monitoring the development of such applications.

### Aim

These guidelines aim to provide Managers and individual employees with information concerning the use of, or the development of any social media application, and to help them get the best out of the tools available whilst maintaining a safe professional environment and protecting themselves, as well as the Organisation.

### Definition of social media

For the purposes of these guidelines, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes e-mail, online social forums, blogs, video and image-sharing websites and similar facilities. (This may include such things as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).

Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

### Use of social media

Where the Organisation encourages employees to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites as part of their work, it is recognised that it is an important part of how the Organisation communicates with its audience and allows communication and networking between staff and partners. Employees who have this remit will be advised at their induction and/or by their Line Manager.

The Organisation understands that employees may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops, tablets and mobile telephones, to access social media websites while they are at work. Such use should nonetheless be in accordance with these guidelines and limited to authorised rest breaks only.

Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the Organisation's social media activities, they are representing Special Olympics GB Limited. Employees who use social media as part of their job must adhere to the following safeguards.

Employees should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the Organisation in the public sphere. These safeguards include:

- making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the Organisation;
- obtaining permission from an appropriate Line Manager or Director before embarking on a public campaign using social media; and
- getting an appropriate Line Manager/Director to check the content before it is published.

Any communications that employees make in a professional capacity through social media must not:

Breach confidentiality, for example by:

- revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by the Organisation or;
- giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or partner contact) or organisation (such as a partner institution); or
- discussing the Organisation's internal workings (such as agreements that it is reaching with clients/customers or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public) or;

Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age or;
- using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of Special Olympics GB Limited.); or
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content or;

Bring the Organisation into disrepute, for example by:

- criticising or arguing with customers, colleagues, partners or;
- making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
- posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content or;

Breach copyright, for example by:

- using someone else's images or written content without permission; or

- failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.

### **Excessive use of social media at work**

Employees should not spend an excessive amount of time, other than during authorised rest breaks, while at work using social media websites and should ensure that the use of social media does not interfere with their other duties.

### **Monitoring use of social media during work time**

The Organisation reserves the right to monitor employees' internet usage in accordance with the 'Computer, Email and Internet Acceptable Use Policy'. The Organisation considers that valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been spending an excessive amount of time using social media websites for non-work-related activity; or
- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in these guidelines.

The Organisation reserves the right to monitor and retain information that it has gathered on employees' use of the internet.

Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

### **Social media in your personal life**

The Organisation recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of SOGB Limited., employees must be aware that they can damage the Organisation if they are recognised as being one of our employees.

Employees are allowed to say that they work for Special Olympics GB Limited., which recognises that it is natural for its staff sometimes to want to discuss their work on social media. The employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) may contain the Organisation's name, but should be focused to the area in which the employee works.

If employees do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which the Organisation), they should include on their profile a statement along the following lines: *"The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."*

Any communications that employees make in a personal capacity through social media must not:

Breach confidentiality, for example by:

- revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by Special Olympics GB Limited. or;

- giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or partner contact) or organisation (such as a partner institution); or
- discussing the Organisation's internal workings (such as agreements that it is reaching with partner institutions/customers or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public) or;

Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age or;
- using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of Special Olympics GB Limited.) or;
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content or;

Bring the Organisation into disrepute, for example by:

- criticising or arguing with, customers, colleagues partners or competitors or;
- making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups or;
- posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content or;

Breach copyright, for example by:

- using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
- failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.