



Social Media Policy

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The Phoenix Performers recognises and embraces the numerous benefits and opportunities that social media offers. While leaders and volunteers are encouraged to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media, they should also be aware that there are some associated risks, especially around issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation.

1. Purpose of the policy

- The purpose of this policy is to encourage good practice, to protect the Phoenix Performers and its leaders and volunteers, and to promote the effective use of social media as part of the Phoenix Performers activities.
- This policy covers personal and professional use of social media and aims to encourage its safe use by the Phoenix Performers and its leaders and volunteers.
- The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using Phoenix owned IT equipment, or equipment belonging to leaders and volunteers.
- Personal communications via social media accounts that are likely to have a negative impact on professional standards or Phoenix's reputation are within the scope of this policy.
- This policy covers all individuals working at all levels, including all leaders and volunteers, members, young people and visitors.

2. Roles, responsibilities and procedure

2.1. Leaders and volunteers should:

- be aware of their online reputation and recognise that their online activity can be seen by others including parents, members and colleagues on social media;
- ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this policy and other relevant policies;
- be aware that any excessive use of social media during sessions may result in disciplinary action;
- be responsible for their words and actions in an online environment. They are therefore advised to consider whether any comment, photograph or video that they are about to post on a social networking site is something that they want members, colleagues, other leaders and volunteers, or even future employers, to read. If in doubt, don't post it!

2.2. SLT are responsible for:

- addressing any concerns and/or questions leaders and volunteers may have on the use of social media;
- operating within the boundaries of this policy and ensuring that all leaders and volunteers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them.

3. Definition of social media

Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. It allows people to share information, ideas and views. Examples of social media include blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Myspace, Flickr and YouTube.

4. Acceptable use

Leaders and volunteers should be aware that content uploaded to social media is not private. Even if you restrict it to 'friends', there is still capacity for it to be re-posted or distributed beyond the intended recipients. Therefore, leaders and volunteers using social media should conduct themselves with professionalism and respect.



4.1. Leaders and volunteers should not upload any content on to social media sites that:

- is confidential to the Phoenix Performers or its leaders, volunteers or members
- amounts to bullying
- amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- brings the Phoenix Performers into disrepute
- contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images or video clips
- undermines the reputation of Phoenix and/or individuals
- is defamatory or knowingly false
- breaches copyright
- is in any other way unlawful.

Leaders and volunteers should be aware of both professional and social boundaries and should not therefore accept or invite 'friend' requests from members or ex-members under the age of 18, or from parents on their personal social media accounts such as Facebook. All communication with parents via social media should be through the Phoenix Performer's social media accounts. Leaders and volunteers should note that the use of social media accounts during sessions is not permitted – with the exception of its usage for marketing/promotional reasons during sessions, rehearsals and performances.

5. Safeguarding

The use of social networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people.

5.1. Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- online bullying;
- grooming, exploitation or stalking;
- exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language;
- encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking.

5.2. In order to mitigate these risks, there are steps you can take to promote safety online:

- You should not use any information in an attempt to locate or meet a child.
- Ensure that any messages, photos or information comply with existing policies.

5.3. Reporting safeguarding concerns

- Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the lead safeguarding officer in the Phoenix Performers.
- Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the child.
- With regard to personal safeguarding, you should report any harassment or abuse you receive online while using your work accounts.

6. Interacting with young people online

The Phoenix Performers encourages members to contact them if they cannot attend a session or rehearsal. This may mean a young person contacts Phoenix via social media. Any inappropriate messages should be reported to the safeguarding lead immediately. All social media accounts can be accessed by all members of the marketing team and SLT. This means that all members of the teams can access any online communications.

Phoenix have several Facebook Groups and WhatsApp Group chats where they encourage young people to interact and communicate. When creating such groups, there should be a



minimum of three leaders or volunteers within the group before any young people are added. If a leader or volunteer leaves the group, they must ensure that there are three leaders or volunteers still within the group before leaving.

7. Reporting, responding and recording cyberbullying incidents

- Leaders and volunteers should never engage with cyberbullying incidents. If in the course of your time with the Phoenix Performers, you discover a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate or inflammatory written material relating to you, or images of you which have been taken and/or which are being used without your permission, you should immediately report this to the SLT.
- Leaders and volunteers should keep any records of the abuse such as text, emails, voicemail, website or social media. If appropriate, screenshots of messages or web pages could be taken and the time, date and address of site should be recorded.

8. Action by Phoenix: inappropriate use of social media

- Following a report of inappropriate use of social media, the SLT will conduct a prompt investigation.
- If in the course of the investigation, it is found that a young person submitted the material to the website, that young person will be disciplined in line with Phoenix's behaviour policy.
- The SLT, where appropriate, will approach the website hosts to ensure the material is either amended or removed as a matter of urgency, ie within 24 hours. If the website requires the individual who is complaining to do so personally, Phoenix will give their full support and assistance.
- Checks will be carried out to ensure that the requested amendments or removals are made. If the website(s) does not co-operate, the SLT will contact the internet service provider (ISP) as the ISP has the ability to block access to certain sites and, in exceptional circumstances, can close down a website.
- If the material is threatening and/or intimidating, the SLT will, with the leader's consent, report the matter to the police.
- The leader will be offered full support.

9. Breaches of this policy

Any leader or volunteer suspected of committing a breach of this policy (or if complaints are received about unacceptable use of social networking that has potentially breached this policy) will be investigated in accordance with the Phoenix Performer's bullying or disciplinary procedure. The leader or volunteer will be expected to co-operate with the investigation which may involve:

- handing over relevant passwords and login details;
- printing a copy or obtaining a screenshot of the alleged unacceptable content;
- determining that the responsibility or source of the content was in fact theirs.

The seriousness of the breach will be considered including the nature of the content, how long the content remained visible on the social media site, the potential for recirculation by others and the impact on the Phoenix Performers or the individuals concerned. Leaders should be aware that actions online can be in breach of the harassment/IT/equality policies and any online breaches of these policies may also be treated as conduct issues in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. If the outcome of an investigation leads to disciplinary action, the consequences will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures. Serious breaches could result in the dismissal. Where conduct is considered to be unlawful, Phoenix will report the matter to the police and other external agencies.



10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed in line with our policy procedures, in accordance with the following, on an as-and-when-required basis:

- legislative changes;
- good practice guidance;
- case law;
- significant incidents reported.

11. Legislation

Acceptable use of social networking must comply with UK law. In applying this policy, the Phoenix Performers will adhere to its rights, responsibilities and duties in accordance with the following:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013

The internet is a fast moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. When using social media, leaders and volunteers should be aware of the potential impact on themselves and Phoenix, whether for work-related or personal use; whether during working hours or otherwise; or whether social media is accessed using Phoenix's equipment or using their personal equipment. Leaders and Volunteers should use discretion and common sense when engaging in online communication. There are some general rules and best practice in the appendix which staff may find helpful.

