Social media policy

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The Access Project uses social media, and recognises that those who are involved in its work may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives. A written policy is therefore required for our volunteers and on the acceptable use of social media when representing The Access Project.

The Access Project encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to set out what The Access Project expects from our volunteers when using social media. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for the charity and that anyone can see what you post - even if your account is private.

This policy is solely for volunteers, and it aims to:

- Give clear guidelines regarding talking points around what volunteers say about the organisation
- Comply with relevant legislation and protect volunteers
- Help volunteer coordinators to encourage appropriate use of social media
- Help volunteers draw a line between their private lives and their volunteering
- Protect The Access Project against liability for the actions of volunteers
- Be clear about sensitive issues such as monitoring and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

1. Policy statement

1.1 The Access Project recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our work using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, blogs and wikis. This policy aims to protect individuals volunteering with us in any role and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write and exercise good judgement (see 2.1).

1.2 Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our reputation, confidential and proprietary information and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of work time and to ensure that

our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect volunteers to adhere to this policy.

2. Who is covered by the policy?

2.1 This policy covers volunteers. There is a separate policy for paid staff, consultants, contractors etc.

3. Scope and purpose of the policy

3.1 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and all other social media sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs and personal websites.

3.2 It applies to the use of social media both for volunteering and personal purposes, whether while volunteering or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to volunteers.

3.3 If a volunteer is found to be in breach of this policy the Head of Volunteer Experience will address this.

3.4 Volunteers may be asked to remove posts which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy.

3.5 This policy links to all other policies; therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equal opportunities, data protection etc.

4. Personnel responsible for implementing the policy

4.1 All volunteer coordinators have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all volunteers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below this.

4.2 All volunteers are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be reported to the Head of Volunteer Experience at: volunteering@theaccessproject.org.uk.

4.3 Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the Safeguarding and Policy Manager at: stayingsafe@theaccessproject.org.uk in line with the reporting procedures outlined in our Safeguarding policy.

5. Guidelines for responsible use of social media

The following sections of the policy provide volunteers with guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

5.1 We want you to help protect our business reputation. Please refrain from disparaging or defamatory statements about:

a) The Access Project
b) The Access Project students, staff, our clients, volunteers or members past or present.

We have an official Volunteer issue resolution policy (see our website) which is the best way for you to give feedback or make a complaint.

5.2   Volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by staff, other volunteers, your tutee, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.

5.3   The Access Project does not permit tagging or naming of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18.

5.4   There is no obligation for volunteers to link their personal social media to any of The Access Project's social media.

5.5   Volunteers are not permitted to set up social media accounts for purposes associated with their volunteering without prior consultation with the Communications Manager at melanie.ramsey@theaccessproject.org.uk.

5.6   If you disclose your affiliation as a volunteer of The Access Project in your profile description, you should also state that your views do not represent those of the organisation you are volunteering with.

5.7   You are responsible for the privacy settings of any social media sites you use and should ensure they are set to the appropriate level if you wish to limit who can see your information.

5.8   Remember that you must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. You should be mindful of Data Protection issues. If in doubt speak to the Safeguarding and Policy Manager at: stayingsafe@theaccessproject.org.uk. Confidential information includes things such as: full names of individuals, names of schools, unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information held on our supporters, staff or volunteers.

5.9   Avoid posting comments about sensitive The Access Project related topics, such as how well you think the charity is doing. Even if you make it clear that your views do not represent those of our charity, your comments could still damage our reputation.

5.10   If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with the Communications team at: media@theaccessproject.org.uk.

5.11   The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your volunteering are regarded as our confidential information, and as such you will be required to delete all such details from your personal social networking accounts, should you finish volunteering with The Access Project.

Disclaimer:
Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith, without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein.