



# Social Media Policy

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## Purpose

The policy will help you understand how to use social media effectively and avoid potential problems.

Axminster Hospital League of Friends has a positive reputation and it is extremely important that this is reflected in our use of social media and in the presentation of our charitable work.

## The Law

Use of social media is covered by a number of UK laws but you should be aware that social media has no national boundaries, so your posts may well be read in other countries. As a guide, you may be breaking the law, if you post (or potentially repost) anything that may fall into any of the following categories:

- [Harassment](#) - Repeatedly contacting someone who doesn't want to be contacted.
- [Menacing behaviour](#) – writing something that may scare someone.
- [Threatening behaviour](#) – making someone believe that you were going to hurt them.
- [Grossly offensive comments](#) – making deeply unpleasant comments about a sensitive issue.
- Libel - a post is potentially libellous, if it is a false statement and may damage someone's reputation.
- Defamation - users may be sued for defamation, if they post an unsubstantiated rumour about someone.
- Data protection – breaching an individual's right to privacy.
- Copyright – posting material without permission that is owned by another person or organisation.

## Our Spokespeople

The Manager and the Chair are authorised to represent Axminster Hospital League of Friends on Social Media.

If you are not authorised to speak on behalf of Axminster Hospital League of Friends you should be aware that you are personally responsible for all online content you publish. If you were to post on an issue related to our work, people who know you may think you were



speaking on our behalf and those that don't, may think so too, if you were to use our logo or refer to us in your posts.

All Social Media posts on behalf of Axminster League of Friends must be approved by our Spokespeople.

## Guidelines

**Do not breach privacy or security.** Do not post personal information, such as someone's home address, and never post about individuals without their consent. Remember that individuals who may not be fully competent, perhaps due to a disability or illness, such as dementia, may not be able to give consent.

**Do not make it easy for criminals,** by posting information that they might use. For example, you will be taking a lot of cash to the bank.

**Clearly state your opinions are your own.** If you are not a spokesperson, make clear that your comments, opinions or posts are your own, so these won't be interpreted as our position. This statement could appear on your profile. On X, this should be in the 'Profile' section, which can be edited under 'Settings'.

**Appear human.** Observing certain guidelines does not mean you have to sound like a robot. Speak in the first person; bring your personality to the forefront.

**Abusive Posts.** A troll is someone who intentionally causes upset, harm, or offence by provoking people online. Be careful not to confuse a troll with someone who is critical and/or upset. There will be people who have valid concerns or have a genuine complaint that may come across as angry and irate. Look at their social media to see they post and how they reply. Trolls often have a profile picture that is an object, rather than a person, or no profile image at all.

People who are abusive are usually trying to provoke a reaction from you, so don't give them what they want. You are unlikely to convince them they are wrong. Post separately to address the issue. You can also adjust your settings to not allow replies, use the relevant abuse reporting system, block them and, if you think they are committing a crime, report them to the police.

**Disagreeing.** If you disagree with something and feel you should respond, always be courteous and do not personalise your response. Focus on the issue, not the person who wrote the post. If possible. offer a solution.



**Text and Symbols.** Using emoji, 'lol' etc can help add humour to a fun post, but don't use if you are making an important point, as this would trivialise your message. And using multiple exclamations, and lots of capital letters, bold and underling is 'shouting', you would not be taken seriously.

**Think first.** If something gets online, it stays there for a long time. Posts can all be traced back to you.

**Ask for a second opinion.** Contact the Manager, Axminster Hospital League of Friends for advice if you are unsure about whether you should comment on a post.

**Be politically neutral.** It is essential that we are not only politically-neutral, but seen to be. We aim to influence the government and its agencies positively in support of our community and criticising them won't help us do that. Equally, we treat all recognised political parties with respect and support any of their initiatives that support our own aims, but we do not actively support or promote any individual party.

**Ethics.** We are a health-related charity, so appearing to support or endorse contrary behaviour such as smoking or getting drunk would be inappropriate. Posts should always be respectful of beneficiaries and portray them in a way they would wish to be, and not cause embarrassment, offence or alarm.

**Respect copyright, fair use and other laws.** If a person can be identified from a photo or video, then it is classed as personal data and we will treat it like any other personal data. Individuals and groups will be asked for their consent to share their image on social media. All images will be deleted after five years. See Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy for more Information about our use of images.

**Don't be offensive.** Axminster Hospital League of Friends does not support extremist views, sexism, pornography/distressing or otherwise offensive imagery, racial/ethnic or religious discrimination, homophobia or disparaging comments against any minority group, under any circumstances.

## Meaning

Much of our communication is through body language and voice tone/loudness etc, and the amount of written text in social media can be limited, so meaning can easily be lost. What

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may appear light hearted and funny , may potentially come across very differently on social media.

Be aware of the potential social and/or cultural differences in your audience who may be more sensitive to particular issues or subjects than the wider population.

## **Moderation of Posts on Our Social Media**

We act as a platform, both online and off, for our community to debate issues that matter to them and we actively encourage diversity of opinion. We believe that open, honest debate can help to address divisions and just because we don't agree with something, doesn't necessarily mean that we would remove it. For example, critical comments about our work are rare but, whilst we always respond in a balanced and measured way, we do not remove these, even when we do not necessarily agree with these, subject to the guidelines below.

The community has diversity of views, some strongly held. There is nothing wrong in holding strong views, but that does not automatically make alternative views offensive. In general, as long as a post does not break the law, is a genuine contribution to a debate and is not offensive, we would not usually remove it. Specifically, we will take down any post that falls into the categories below:

- Anything we believe may fall into any of the categories in the section above titled 'The Law'.
- We would remove any post that contained views that we feel the majority of reasonable people would consider to be offensive.
  - The section 'Don't be offensive' above is not an exhaustive list but does provide guidance on what would normally be considered offensive.
  - The use of 'swear words' would normally also be considered offensive.
  - As would derogatory comments about an individual or organisation.
- Any post that is irrelevant to our work and the online conversations being held.

We may also block those posting such material and/or report the issue to the relevant authorities.

## **Take Down Process**

- Authority to remove posts has been delegated, as follows:
  - Immediate take-down of posts that are obviously unacceptable – Manager Axminster Hospital League of Friends

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- Take down of posts that may be unacceptable – Manger and Chair, Axminster Hospital League of Friends.
- Before a post is taken down, screenshot or otherwise record the post.

## Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Trustees	Feb 2024	Initial draft approved	Annually

## Resources

[Charity Commission](#): Managing online risk.

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

[NCVO](#): Online safeguarding resources.

[Digi Safe](#): Step-by-step digital safeguarding guide.

[Facebook](#): Your child's online safety.

[National Youth Agency](#): Safeguarding & Risk Management Hub.

[NCPCC Learning](#): Protecting children from online abuse.

[NSPCC Learning](#): Social media and online safety.