



SENDAC Social Media Policy

A guide for staff/volunteers on using social media to promote the work of SENDAC and in a personal capacity

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. SENDAC will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating SENDAC's work. It is important for some staff/volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of SENDAC's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to SENDAC's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all staff/volunteers, members of all levels, volunteers and trustees, and applies to content posted on both a SENDAC device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff/volunteers must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of SENDAC, and the use of social media by staff/volunteers in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff/volunteers support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.



Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the SENDAC office. However, when using the internet at work, it is important that staff/volunteers refer to our [policy name i.e., IT Policy]. You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during your lunch breaks. But usage should not be excessive and interfere with your duties.

Point of contact for social media

Our SENDAC Steering Group is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the Social Media Officer. No other staff/volunteers member can post content on SENDAC's official channels without the permission of the Marketing and Communications Parent Rep Lead.

Which social media channels do we use?

SENDAC uses the following social media channels:

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/sendalliancecumbria>

This account is used to share news, information and feedback updates on any work to do with SEND improvement carried out by SENDAC as well as providing other useful information for Parents & Carers of SEN in Cumbria. We also hope to encourage people to become in our work in whatever way they can.

Guidelines

Using SENDAC's Social Media Channels — Appropriate Conduct

1. The SENDAC Steering Group is responsible for setting up and managing SENDAC's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Chair of SENDAC will have access to these accounts.
2. Our social media officer responds to comments Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm, and then on evenings and weekends we have a social media out-of-hours Rota covered by the whole SENDAC team.
3. Be an ambassador for our organisation. Staff/volunteers should ensure they reflect SENDAC values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our organisation's Mission Statement sets out our tone of voice that all staff/volunteers should refer to when posting content on SENDAC's social media channels.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for SENDAC, and accurately reflects SENDAC's agreed position.



5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
8. If staff/volunteers outside of SENDAC Steering Group wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the SENDAC Chair about this.
9. Staff/volunteers shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If staff/volunteers are sharing information about supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from SENDAC. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff/volunteers must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
10. Always check facts. Staff/volunteers should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
12. Staff/volunteers should refrain from offering personal opinions via SENDAC's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about SENDAC's position on a particular issue, please speak to a member of the committee.
13. It is vital that SENDAC does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
14. Staff/volunteers should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.
15. Staff/volunteers should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of SENDAC. This could confuse messaging and organisation awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the SENDAC committee can ensure consistency of the organisation and focus on building a strong following.



16. SENDAC is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.
17. If a complaint is made on SENDAC's social media channels, staff/volunteers should seek advice from the chair or vice chair before responding. If they are not available, then staff/volunteers should speak to the Chair of SENDAC.
18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the organisations reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The SENDAC Steering Group regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of SENDAC so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis, the SENDAC Steering Group will action the organisations crisis management plan.

If any staff/volunteers outside of the SENDAC Steering Group become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on SENDAC's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Chair of SENDAC immediately.

Use of Personal Social Media Accounts — Appropriate Conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. SENDAC staff/volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with SENDAC's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive SENDAC. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of SENDAC. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about SENDAC's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent SENDAC's positions, policies or opinions."
2. Staff/volunteers who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at SENDAC should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the [team name]. Similarly, staff/volunteers who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for SENDAC should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Chair of SENDAC.



3. Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing SENDAC's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with SENDAC and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the public, colleagues, partners and funders.
5. SENDAC works with several high-profile people, including the Local Authority. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the organisation, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by SENDAC. This includes asking for retweets about the organisation.

If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the organisation, please speak to the SENDAC Steering Group.

7. If a staff/volunteer's member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to SENDAC, they should talk to the SENDAC Steering Group immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
8. SENDAC is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing SENDAC, staff/volunteers are expected to hold SENDAC's position of neutrality. Staff/volunteers who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from SENDAC and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
9. Never use SENDAC's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Chair of SENDAC.
10. Always protect yourself and the organisation. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely. You can find more information on your responsibilities when using our computer systems in our Data Protection Policy.
11. Think about your reputation as well as the organisation's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.



12. We encourage staff/volunteers to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support SENDAC and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff/volunteers to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the SENDAC Steering Group who will respond as appropriate.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff/volunteers are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring SENDAC into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff/volunteers abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff/volunteers make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that SENDAC is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. Please refer to our Confidentiality Policy for further information.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff/volunteers should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official SENDAC social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law.



However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the SENDAC Steering Group overseen by the Chair.

Use of social media in the recruitment process – currently all voluntary

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Recruitment Policy, and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through the SENDAC Steering Group.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with SENDAC's Equal Opportunities Policy

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff/volunteers member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Social Media Officer immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff/volunteers should ensure the online relationship with SENDAC follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff/volunteers should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff/volunteers should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and SENDAC content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.



Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of SENDAC is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff/volunteers including Volunteers, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our HR policy for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff/volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Chair of SENDAC.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a member of SENDAC releases information through SENDAC's social media channels that is in the interest of the public, SENDAC's Whistleblowing Policy must be initiated before any further action is taken.

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