SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for staff on using social media to promote the work of Lightyear Foundation and in a personal capacity

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Lightyear Foundation will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: May 2024
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, X, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Lightyear Foundation’s work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of Lightyear Foundation’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 Lightyear Foundation’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 carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all staff members of all levels, volunteers and trustees, and applies to content posted on both a Lightyear Foundation device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff 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 Lightyear Foundation, and the use of social media by staff 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 support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

Our Freelance Social Media Manager, Beth Whittal-Williams 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 our Community Manager/Assistant to the CEO, Rosie Mellors. No other staff member can post content on Lightyear Foundation’s official channels without the permission of the CEO, Jeff Banks. The exception to this is the SEN in STEM Network group which is monitored by Emma Zeale.
Which social media channels do we use?
Lightyear Foundation uses the following social media channels:

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/LightyearFoundation/
Instagram https://www.instagram.com/lightyearfdn/
X https://twitter.com/lightyear_fdn
Linkedin (Company page) https://www.linkedin.com/company/lightyear-foundation
Linkedin (SEN in STEM network group) www.linkedin.com/groups/8903108/
YouTube http://www.youtube.com/@lightyearfoundation4190

Guidelines

Using Lightyear Foundation’s social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Beth Whittal-Williams, Social Media Manager is responsible for managing Lightyear Foundation’s social media channels with the exception of the Linked in group, SEN in STEM network which is moderated by Emma Zeale, STEM Outreach Programme Manager. Only those authorised to do so by the CEO will have access to these accounts. Passwords are held by the social media manager, CEO and Community Manager/Assistant to the CEO.

2. Accounts including direct messages are monitored periodically throughout the week, for a maximum of 2 hours across 7 days by Social Media Manager, Beth Whittal-Williams.

3. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff should ensure they reflect Lightyear Foundations values in what they post.

4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Lightyear Foundation, and accurately reflects Lightyear Foundation’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 outside of the Social Media Manager wish to contribute content for social media, this should be sent on email to the social media manager via the Community Manager/Assistant to the CEO.

9. All content is planned in advance in a Google planning spreadsheet and checked by the Community Manager/Assistant to the CEO before being scheduled and posted online.
Access to the planning sheet is given to Beth Whittal-Williams, Rosie Mellors, Jeff Banks, Emma Zeale and Em Diserens.

10. Staff shouldn’t post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If staff 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 Lightyear Foundation. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media. Respect copyright laws and obtain proper authorization before sharing content created by others.

11. Always check facts. Staff 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.

12. 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.

13. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via Lightyear Foundation’s social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by ‘liking’, ‘sharing’ or ‘retrieving’. If you are in doubt about Lightyear Foundation’s position on a particular issue, please speak to Jeff Banks, CEO.

14. It is vital that Lightyear Foundation does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

15. Staff 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.

16. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Lightyear Foundation. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the social media manager can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

17. Lightyear Foundation 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.

18. If a complaint is made on Lightyear Foundation’s social media channels, staff should seek advice from the CEO before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the Community Manager/Assistant to the CEO.
19. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity’s reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The Social Media Manager regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of Lightyear Foundation so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the social media manager will do the following: Contact CEO and Community Manager/Assistant to the CEO for advice on whether or not to respond online and next steps.

If any staff outside of the social media manager become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Lightyear Foundation’s social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the CEO immediately.

20. Respect the privacy and confidentiality of our beneficiaries, donors, and colleagues. Do not disclose sensitive or proprietary information.

**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. Lightyear Foundation staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with Lightyear Foundation’s values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Lightyear Foundation. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Lightyear Foundation.

2. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Lightyear Foundation and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself.

3. Always protect yourself and the charity. 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.

4. Think about your reputation as well as the charity’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.

5. We encourage staff/trustees 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 Lightyear Foundation and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff 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 CEO 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 are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring Lightyear Foundation’s name into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

**Copyright law**

It is critical that all staff 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 make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Lightyear Foundation is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

**Discrimination and harassment**

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Lightyear Foundation 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

Use of social media in the recruitment process

There should be no systematic or routine checking of a 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 Lightyear Foundation’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 member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the CEO 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 should ensure the online relationship with Lightyear Foundation follows the same rules as the offline ‘real-life’ relationship. Staff 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 should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Lightyear Foundation content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy.

Consequences of Violations:

Violations of this social media policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer status. Lightyear Foundation reserves the right to remove any content that violates this policy and to take appropriate legal action if necessary.

Acknowledgment:
By engaging in social media activities on behalf of Lightyear Foundation, employees, volunteers, and representatives agree to abide by the guidelines outlined in this policy. They also acknowledge their responsibility to uphold the organisation’s reputation and values in all online interactions.

Review and Updates:

This social media policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any updates or revisions will be communicated to all relevant individuals in a timely manner.