



St Mary's
University
Students'
Union

SMSU Social Media Policy 2023

INTRODUCTION

St Mary's Students' Union (SMSU) is committed to ensuring that a safe and supportive environment exists for all Trustees, staff/officers, volunteers, students and visitors to the Union. The work of the Union may include young people or adults whose involvement and input to the Union is welcomed, encouraged and appreciated.

Social media channels provide important and exciting opportunities for the Union and its constituent parts to communicate and engage with a wide range of audiences and stakeholders. These channels also provide a range of professional and personal opportunities for Trustees, staff, officers, volunteers and students.

However, there are also several risks associated with the use of social media which could ultimately impact the Union's reputation.

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 1.1. This policy helps to clarify how to use social media platforms to protect and benefit the Union, its staff and its students.
- 1.2. Provide guidance to all staff and student communities using social media in association with SMSU on how to responsibly use channels to maximise benefits whilst mitigating risks. In particular, it provides information on responsibilities when communicating via social media.
- 1.3. Enable SMSU staff, officers and student communities to appropriately enhance and add value to their activities and achievements.
- 1.4. Ensure SMSU staff, students, officers and student communities affiliated with SMSU are protected.
- 1.5. Ensure privacy rights are maintained and that social media activity does not lead to the discovery of data that would otherwise have rightfully remained undisclosed.
- 1.6. Ensure a consistent messaging approach across SMSU channels/channels affiliated with SMSU and channels associated with SMSU through student communities/leaders such as societies, elected officers, EDI chairs etc.

2. DEFINITION

2.1. In this policy, social media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Social media is an ever-evolving medium. Some channels that SMSU is using include:

- Instagram
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter (X)
- Youtube
- TikTok

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1. Social media usage on behalf of a society or group

- Students using social media on behalf of a society or student group should take care that their content does not breach copyright.
- They should not do anything that may be considered discriminatory against, or bullying and harassment of, any individual or community.
- Societies and student groups should be mindful of their association with SMSU. Any content posted on their channels must not disregard the work of the Union.
- Content posted on behalf of a society or student group must not breach the terms and conditions of the social media channel.
- Students and staff should not post personal content on channels associated with their student group or society (which is affiliated with the Union).
- Students and staff must not represent or post content in support of a political party or movement when using channels that can be associated with the Union.
- Any society or student group/community making a social media channel that in some form represents the Union must bring this to the attention of SMSU.

2.2. Personal use of social media

- Students and staff should not do anything that may be considered discriminatory against, or bullying and harassment of, any individual or community on their personal social media channels.
- Students and staff must not use their personal social media channels to reveal confidential information about the Union, the University, its staff and its students.
- To avoid confusing its audiences, SMSU prohibits the use of its logo(s) on any social media channels without the permission of the marketing and communications team. Students must contact the Membership Services Manager if they would like to use the SMSU logo(s) on their social networking channels on sarah.redman@stmarys.ac.uk.
- Official complaints made by students regarding social media usage should be made using the official complaints channels of either the University or the Students' Union, depending on the context of the complaint.
- Students and staff must not declare, imply or indicate that their content or views are representative of those of the Union. If the Union is identified, students and staff must make it clear they are speaking on their own behalf. However, this does not give permission to students and staff to post content that is discriminatory on their channels.

2.3. SMSUs use of social media

- SMSU reserves the right to remove comments from their social media that they think is offensive or discriminatory or has a negative impact on the Union without notice.
- SMSU must not post content that represents or in support of any political party or movement.
- SMSU must adhere to brand guidelines when posting any content on their channels. This does not apply to societies and student groups.
- SMSU must always adhere to copyright laws and privacy policies of individual social media channels.
- Any new social media channels created by SMSU must be approved by the Membership Services Manager.
- Usernames and passwords for channels run by SMSU must be shared with the marketing and communications team to ensure that there are no breaches of the policy and the safe use of these channels.

3. RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1. This policy is owned by SMSU's marketing and communications team, which is managed by the Membership Services Manager. It will be the responsibility of the Membership Services Manager to ensure that the policy is implemented, communicated and regularly reviewed.
- 3.2. The marketing and communications team will regularly monitor the impact of the policy and ensure that any issues relating to the use of social media that breach this policy are dealt with through the appropriate channels.

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