

Social Media and Communication Policy

This is the Social Media and Communication Policy as adopted by the Unloc Leadership Board on Monday 18th September 2023 and will be reviewed within two years of this date.

Purpose and Scope

- The terms 'child' or 'children' apply to anyone under the age of 18
- The term 'parent' applies to anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the child
- The term 'staff' applies to members of staff and volunteers

This policy covers all forms of social media, including Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Wikipedia, other social networking sites, and other internet postings, including blogs. It applies to the use of social media for both organisation and personal purposes, during working hours and in your own time to the extent that it may affect the organisation. The policy applies both when the social media is accessed using Unloc technology and also when accessed using equipment or software belonging to staff or others.

Whilst we recognise the benefits which may be gained from appropriate use of social media, it is also important to be aware that it poses significant risks to our organisation. These risks include;

- Disclosure of confidential information and intellectual property.
- Damage to our reputation and the risk of legal claims.

To minimise these risks this policy sets out the rules applying to the use of social media.

This policy covers all staff and others including consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action as articulated in Unloc's Disciplinary and Grievance procedure. Any misuse of social media should be reported to your line manager. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the HR Manager.

Policy Aims

- To protect all children involved with our organisation and who make use of internet-enabled technology while in our care.
- To provide staff with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and informing them how to respond to incidents.
- To ensure our organisation is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

Managing Unloc's corporate online presence

Our online presence through our website/s or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 members of staff will have access to each account and password.
- The account will be monitored by at least two designated members of staff in order to provide transparency, who will have been appointed by the Marketing Manager or the Leadership Team.
- The designated staff managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead to advise on safeguarding requirements.
- Designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved).
- We will make sure children are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that's happened online.
- Identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number shouldn't be posted on social media platforms unless expressed otherwise.
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as an organisation.
- Schools/parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication.
- Schools/parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media.
- Video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

Responsible use of social media by staff

Staff must not use social media in a way that might breach any of our policies, any express or implied contractual obligations, legislation, or regulatory requirements. In particular, use of social media must comply with:

- The Equality and Diversity policy
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- The Safer Recruitment Policy
- Contractual confidentiality requirements
- Other key policies/requirements

In your use of social media you must not:

- Make disparaging or defamatory statements about us, our staff, clients, customers, or suppliers.
- Harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against someone in any way.
- Use data obtained in the course of your employment with us in any way which breaches the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 or Unloc Data Protection Policy.

- Disclose any intellectual property, confidential or commercially sensitive information relating to Unloc.
- Make statements which cause, or may cause, harm to our reputation or otherwise be prejudicial to our interests.
- Communicate with children via personal accounts, except to respond to unsolicited messages redirecting a child to contact via acceptable routes.
- 'Friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts
- Delete any messages or communications sent to or from organisation accounts unless explicitly asked to do so due to error.
- Not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene.

Staff should:

- Be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it as per contractual agreement.
- Seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Only communicate with children when it is a necessary part of the child's involvement with Unloc.
- Make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may 'follow' them on social media.
- Avoid communicating with children via email or organisational social media outside of normal office hours, unless necessary such as when on a residential weekend.
- Maintain the organisation's tone and write in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals, avoiding kisses (X's) or using slang or inappropriate language.
- Undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online.
- Report concerns relating to social media in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures.
- Avoid using social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our organisation reputation.
- Make it clear in personal postings that you are speaking on your own behalf, in particular write in the first person and use a personal email address. If you disclose that you are an employee of us, you must state that your views do not represent those of your employer.
- Remember that you are personally responsible for what you communicate on social media. Often materials published will be widely accessible by the public and will remain accessible for a long time. If staff are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they should discuss it with their manager before making the post..

Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), we'll take the following precautions to ensure children's safety:

- Unloc will seek parental permission on each occasion we need to contact children directly; the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified within the Unloc consent form and agreed upon.
- A method of accountability will be arranged, such as copies of texts, messages or emails also being sent to another member of staff or to parents.
- Smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.
- Staff should have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with parents or children.
- Texts, emails or messages will be used for communicating information – such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events and work that needs to be completed ahead of time.
- If a child misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member in conversation, the member of staff will take the following steps:
 - End the conversation or stop replying.
 - Suggest discussing the subject further at the next practice or event.
 - Inform the organisation's lead safeguarding officer in the interest of transparency.
- All Unloc devices including all phones and Macbooks will be enlisted in device management systems.

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