

Professionalism and Social Media Policy

1: Company philosophy

Taking part in social media and networking sites offers great benefits to us as individuals and as an organisation. Malvern Special Families expects employees to bear in mind how their actions reflect on the charity.

2: The definition of “social media”

This policy is intended to help staff make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc, as well as photos posted on Instagram and Pinterest. We understand that new sites are always popping up, and thus we would like to make it clear that the policy is not limited to the named sites but covers all social media and networking sites.

3: Everything on the internet is public

Most of the information you put in social networking sites becomes public. You cannot assume that everyone has restricted their privacy settings and you cannot control whom others allow to have access to their pages etc. Colleagues, families and friends may have access to the content you post online and information originally intended for friends and family can be passed on and traced back. Always assume that all your social media communication is visible to everyone, anywhere.

Due to the ubiquity of social media sites, there is high potential for employees to accidentally release information confidential to their employer.

4: Identifying yourself as an employee of the company

In your profiles and personal information, employees and volunteers are permitted to identify themselves as working for Malvern Special Families but in doing so you take on the responsibility for representing the company in a professional manner. If you identify yourself as an employee of the company, our policy requires that any personal blogs and other personal posts contain disclaimers that make it clear that the opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of the company.

Whether you identify yourself as an employee of Malvern Special Families or not we expect you to adhere to this policy and to represent yourself respectably and professionally at all times. Everything you post has the potential to reflect on the company and its image.

5: Referring to clients, customers, or partners

Malvern Special Families' relationships with clients, customers and partners are valuable assets that can be damaged through a thoughtless comment. Employees are not to reference any families, clients, customers, or partners without obtaining their express permission to do so. Staff should normally refrain from sending and accepting 'friend' requests from families we support except where the member of staff has a connection with them beyond the context of their work at Malvern Special Families.

6: Proprietary or confidential information

The Confidentiality Policy must be adhered to at all times and failing to do so could lead to disciplinary action. Social networking sites have varying levels of security and as public sites; all are vulnerable to security breaches. For this reason Malvern Special Families information is not to be discussed or referred to on such sites. This does not include such things like asking colleagues if they are working at a club as this does not hold MSF information.

7: Terms of Service

Most social networking sites require that users, when they sign up, agree to abide by a Terms of Service (ToS) document. This policy holds employees responsible for reading, knowing, and complying with the ToS of the sites they use.

8: Copyright and other legal issues

This policy requires that employees at all times comply with the law in regard to copyright/plagiarism. Posting of someone else's work without permission is not allowed (other than short quotes that comply with the "fair use" exceptions). Other relevant laws include those related to libel and defamation of character. Defamatory statements can lead to lawsuits against the author of the statement — and if that is one of our employees, at the very least it can bring bad publicity for Malvern Special Families.

9. Intellectual property

The Malvern Special Families logo is the organisation's intellectual property and the logo must only be used with permission from the charity and must appear in its original dimensions and colours.

10: Productivity impact

Social networking sites can be good tools for developing business relationships, but they can also turn into big time-wasters. Social networking activities are not to interfere with the employee's primary job responsibilities. Any use of social media on the Malvern Special Families network should be confined to break times when there are no clubs in session.

11: Disciplinary action

Violation of the policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Other policies to reference are the Confidentiality Policy and the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

12. Cyber bullying

Malvern Special Families takes cyber bullying seriously and any inappropriate photograph, comment or sensitive personal information posted vindictively will be investigated and addressed through our anti-bullying and disciplinary procedures.

13. Security

Staff are responsible for ensuring that passwords and other access controls for their social media accounts are of adequate strength and kept secure. Staff should be extra vigilant not to leave personal data open and unattended.

"Fraping" is the act of going on someone's already logged in Facebook account and posting something that is meant to harm or embarrass them. If you leave your phone unlocked and lying around, or leave yourself logged in on someone else's or a public device, common circumstances when fraping occurs – the responsibility for any activity on your account is yours.

Where this activity harms the reputation of Malvern Special Families this matter will be dealt with seriously and in line with the disciplinary procedures. We will act immediately to protect, as far as Professionalism and Social Media policy
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reasonably possible, Malvern Special Families' reputation. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and us. Where evidence of misuse is found we may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with our disciplinary procedures. If necessary such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

Guidelines for professionalism in use of social media

- Don't post inappropriate pictures (nudity, over-drinking, reference to sexualised behaviour, any illegal activity, etc.)
- Do not use social media to embarrass or disparage Malvern Special Families as a charity, its service users, staff or volunteers. Our reputation is important; so, too, is yours. Think carefully about how what you do reflects upon you as a professional and upon us as an employer of professionals.
- Don't talk about any confidential Malvern Special Families information. Even when at home in your own time you must work within guidelines of our Confidentiality Policy. The mention of children's names, behaviours and other confidential information should never be recorded in your status update or on a "Wall" etc. Such behaviour can lead to disciplinary action.
- Don't post text, images or videos that were created by someone else without crediting them.
- When adding new friends from work on Facebook, be aware that they will be able to see existing photos (those you have posted and those you are tagged in) and your post history.
- Don't upload or tag photos of friends or work colleagues, which may harm their professional reputation and that of Malvern Special Families.
- Represent who you are, but be keen to what information sparks controversy
- Don't use foul language
- Review your privacy settings regularly
- Understand what happens to your profile when you add an application
- When you 'become a fan' or join a group, understand some may not get your inner circle's inside jokes or may think you are endorsing certain ideas/services/products
- Facebook is fine for collaboration and group communication for staff nights etc. but is not a substitute for inter-company communications. Important information should be transmitted within normal company communication channels, not on Facebook etc.
- Be clear that you are not an official spokesperson for Malvern Special Families and that your views do not necessarily reflect those of the company.
- Do not use pictures of yourself or others in uniform
- Do not use the Malvern Special Families logo on social-networking sites without approval.