

Vision 4 Youth Social Media Policy

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. Across all social media platforms, Vision 4 Youth (V4Y) aims to use social media as a way of delivering a positive message about the work we do.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating V4Y'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 V4Y's work.

Benefits of social media:

Engagement – Social media allows for a wider engagement with the public in real-time;

Communication – Contact with the public can be increased and greater engagement can help inform decision making;

Insight – Contact and information exchange through social media allows V4Y to be aware of public opinion and provides a larger arena for public consultation;

Promotion – Communication with the local community allows for the promotion of volunteering opportunities, fundraising initiatives and as an advertisement for youth club users.

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 V4Y'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, volunteers and trustees, and applies to content posted on both a V4Y device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff and 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 V4Y, and the use of social media by staff and 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 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 admin team 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 Development Manager. No other staff member can post content on V4Y's official channels without the permission of the Development Manager.

Which social media channels do we use?

V4Y uses the following social media channels:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/vision4youthpage/ aimed at parents, the local community and prospective volunteers

Twitter - @v4ytwit aimed at parents, the local community including businesses, and prospective volunteers

Instagram – v4youth aimed at young people

Guidelines

Using V4Y's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The admin team is responsible for setting up and managing V4Y's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Development Manager will have access to these accounts.
2. The accounts will be monitored every day but not consistently due to the availability of the members of the team.
3. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff and volunteers should ensure they reflect V4Y's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that all staff should refer to when posting content on V4Y's social media channels.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for V4Y, and accurately reflects V4Y's agreed position.
5. Bring value to our audience. 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 and volunteers outside of the admin team wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the admin team about this.
9. 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 V4Y. 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.
10. 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.
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 should refrain from offering personal opinions via V4Y's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about V4Y's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Development Manager.

13. It is vital that V4Y 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 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 should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of V4Y. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the admin team can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. V4Y 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 V4Y's social media channels, staff and volunteers should seek advice from the Development Manager before responding. If they are not available, then they should speak to the trustees.

18. 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. Examples might include young people causing damage or a member of the V4Y team disrespecting a community organisation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

If any staff outside of the admin team become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on V4Y's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Development Manager immediately and not engage directly by responding on social media.

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. V4Y staff and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with V4Y's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive V4Y. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of V4Y. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about V4Y's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent V4Y's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Staff and volunteers who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at V4Y should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the admin

team. Similarly, staff and volunteers who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for V4Y should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the admin team.

3. All staff and trustees must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing V4Y's view.

4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with V4Y and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, volunteers and funders.

5. 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 charity, please speak to the Development Manager to share the details.

6. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to V4Y, they should talk to the admin team immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

7. V4Y 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 V4Y, staff are expected to hold V4Y's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from V4Y and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

8. Never use V4Y's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the admin team. Logos should always be used in conjunction with the charity number (1172352).

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. We encourage staff 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 V4Y 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 admin team 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 V4Y 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 V4Y is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date. Please refer to our Data Protection Policy for further information.

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 V4Y 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

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 or a volunteer considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 V4Y 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 V4Y 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 V4Y is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our Disciplinary Policy for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Development Manager.

Date of Review

28/04/2023