



Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association

Guidance on using Social Media Responsibly

The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA) is a voluntary organisation and a registered company limited by guarantee. The Companies objects are to promote, encourage and develop Pipe Band music within the United Kingdom and Internationally.

Introduction

- The purpose of this document is to advise RSPBA Employees, Members, Volunteers and Band Members how to stay safe online and also protect your online and professional reputation.
- The principles of this guidance relate to every social media situation that you may face, and sets out broad principles to enable you to think through issues and act in a consistent manner
- The principles outlined in this guidance can also generally be applied to other kinds of online communication, such as personal websites and blogs, discussion boards and general content shared online, including text, photographs, images, video and audio files.
- If a complaint is received, this guidance will be used as a reference document in any investigation undertaken and any potential action taken by the RSPBA Board of Directors
- As the nature and scope of social media is constantly evolving, we will aim to review this guidance as necessary and reapply to new situations that emerge.

What is Social Media?

Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

If used responsibly and appropriately, social networking sites can offer several benefits, these include:

- building and maintaining professional relationships
- establishing or accessing support networks and being able to discuss specific issues, interests,
- research
- being able to access resources for continuing professional development (CPD).

What different types of social networks are there?

Most sites have a minimum age for users to be eligible to use the service, however evidence shows that children younger than these limits are accessing social media sites, often because the sites do not ask for confirmation of age at sign up.

Some commonly used Social Media sites -

- Facebook (minimum age 13) – lets users create their own profiles, share status updates, pictures, videos and chat with other users, and also has a messenger app.

- Instagram (minimum age 13) – allows users to alter photos, upload them to Instagram and share them to other social networking sites. Photos can be sent directly to specific users. A video feature is also available.
- Snapchat (minimum age 13) – a photo-sharing app where users can send photos or videos to their friends. These will display on screen for up to ten seconds before being deleted, although it is possible to take screenshots of messages and download other apps designed to capture and save Snapchat content.
- Twitter (minimum age 13) – a social network that lets users send and read ‘tweets’, messages limited to 280 characters.
- Tumblr (minimum age 16) – a social networking site where users can post blogs and follow other people’s blogs. Some of the content on this site contains sexual or pornographic images.
- WhatsApp (minimum age 16) – free-of-charge, real-time messaging. Users can share images and videos, take part in ‘group chats’ and share locations. As it’s based on knowing the user’s phone number, you can only message users if you already know their telephone number.
- YouTube (minimum age 13) – allows users to watch, create and comment on videos.
- ASKfm (minimum age 13) – users can ask other users questions, with the option of anonymity. ASKfm’s reputation as a platform for cyberbullying has been highlighted in the media.

How to use social media responsibly

- **Be informed** Make sure that you familiarise yourself with how individual social media applications work, and be clear about the advantages and disadvantages.
- **Protect your privacy** Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. When posting content online there is potential for that content to become publicly available through a variety of means, even if it was intended to be shared privately. Therefore, you should refrain from posting any content online that you would not be happy for anyone to see, even if you feel confident that a particular individual would never see it.
- **Think carefully before you post** It is important to realise that even the strictest privacy settings have limitations. This is because, once something is online, it can be copied and redistributed, also just because a Tweet or Facebook comment has disappeared from a feed, it hasn’t ‘vanished’ completely. As many celebrities have found to their costs, a flippant remark or online comment made 10 years ago can come back to haunt you a decade later, and have a very real impact on both your private and professional standing.
- **Protect your professionalism and your reputation** If you are unsure whether something you post online could compromise your professionalism or your reputation, you should always think about the potential impact in the RSPBA as well as the wider community. It is also important to consider who and what you associate with on social media. For example, acknowledging someone else’s post can imply that you endorse or support their point of view. You should consider the possibility of other people mentioning you in inappropriate posts. If you have used social media for a number of years, it is important to consider, what you may have posted online in the past.
- **The web is not anonymous.** You should assume that all information posted online can be traced back to you. You are accountable for your actions both on and offline, including the information you post via your personal social media accounts.
- **Use disclaimers** Wherever practical, include a prominent disclaimer stating who you work for or are affiliated with (e.g. member of RSPBA) and that anything you publish is your personal opinion and that you are not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don’t count on it to avoid trouble, it may not have legal effect.
- **Respect confidentiality and sensitivity** When using social media, you must maintain the privacy of confidential information. This includes information that is not publically

accessible, widely known, or not expected to be shared outside of the RSPBA. Remember, if you are online, you are 'on the record', much of the content posted online is public and searchable. Within the scope of your authorisation by the RSPBA, it is perfectly acceptable to talk about the RSPBA and have a dialogue with the community, but it is not okay to publish confidential information from the RSPBA. Confidential information includes things such as details about litigation, unreleased information and unpublished details e.g. volunteers, members, financial information etc.

- **Consent** When using social media you should be considerate to others and should not post information when you have been asked not to, or where consent has not been sought and given. You must also remove information about another person if that person asks you to do so. Permission should always be sought if the use or publication of information is not incidental, but directly related to an individual. This is particularly relevant to publishing any information regarding minors. In such circumstances, parental or guardian consent is mandatory
- **Gaining permission when publishing a person's identifiable image** You must obtain express permission from an individual to use a direct, clearly identifiable image of that person. You should also refrain from posting any information or photos of a sensitive nature. This could include accidents, incidents or controversial behaviour.
- **Complying with applicable laws** Do not post or link to content that contains illegal or indecent content, including defamatory, vilifying or misleading and deceptive content. It is critical that you comply with the laws governing copyright in relation to material owned by others and the RSPBA's own copyrights and brands. You should never quote or use more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and you should always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good practice to link to others work rather than reproduce it.
- **Discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying** The public in general and the RSPBA's employees and members, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. You must not post any material that is offensive, harassing, discriminatory, embarrassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, hateful, racist, sexist or otherwise inappropriate
- **Consequences** You should always follow the terms and conditions for any third party sites in which you participate. Always keep in mind that what you write is your responsibility, and failure to abide by these guidelines could put your membership of the RSPBA at risk.

How to raise a concern

If you notice inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to the RSPBA, its employees, volunteers or any of its members, you should report the circumstances immediately. Using the RSPBA Complaints and Grievances Policy.

Link to this Policy - www.rspba.org/documents/Complaints.pdf

This procedure must not be used to initiate a Protection of a Vulnerable Group (PVG) or Child protection complaint. In this event please refer to the relevant process

Link to Policy - www.rspba.org/documents/pvg/RSPBA_Safeguarding_Reporting_Procedures.pdf