

Swindon Music Service Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of modern communication, offering exciting opportunities to share and celebrate our activities both in schools and at the music centre. While these platforms allow us to engage with our audience in new and dynamic ways, it's crucial to use them responsibly and consider their potential impact on our reputation.

This policy aims to:

- Provide guidance on the effective and appropriate use of social media
- Outline how to address potential misuse of social networking applications
- Support innovation while establishing a framework of good practice
- Ensure the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our digital interactions

2. Purpose

The primary objectives of this policy are to:

- Promote good practices and safe, effective use of social media
- Encourage responsible social media use by pupils, staff, and parents/carers
- Protect all stakeholders from potential negative effects of social networking
- Safeguard Swindon Music Service's reputation from unwarranted online abuse
- Define appropriate and inappropriate social media use for tutors, staff, and parents/carers
- Establish procedures for addressing inappropriate or unlawful social media use
- Provide comprehensive social media guidance to all parties
- Mitigate legal risks associated with social media usage
- Maintain the music service's reputation in the digital sphere
- Ensure clear distinction between official and unofficial online representations of the music service

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Swindon Music Service stakeholders, including employees, trustees, students, and volunteers (collectively referred to as 'music service representatives')
- All uses of social networking applications for music service-related purposes
- Both external and internal-facing uses of social media

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- E-Safety Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Privacy Notice
- Code of Conduct

4. Definition of Social Media

For the purposes of this policy, social media encompasses:

- Social networking websites and apps (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram)
- Video and photo sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, TikTok)
- Gaming platforms (e.g., Roblox, Minecraft)
- Any emerging forms of digital communication technologies

Swindon Music Service maintains official accounts on Facebook, Twitter/X, and regularly updates its website.

5. Safeguarding Measures

To protect our tutors, staff, and trustee board when using social media, we have implemented the following safeguarding measures:

- Obtained written parental permission for posting pictures of children
- Instructed parents/carers not to post images of children other than their own without permission
- Reminded parents at public events about social media posting etiquette
- Committed to prompt removal of unauthorized photos of children
- Maintained an up-to-date list of children without photo permissions
- Incorporated social media permission requests into Swindon Young Musicians enrolment
- Prohibited the use of children's full names in social media posts

6. Using Social Media on Behalf of the Music Service

All staff and tutors are expected to maintain high standards of professionalism in their social media communications, consistent with our code of conduct. When posting on behalf of the music service:

- Maintain the same level of respect and professionalism as in other forms of communication
- Provide a positive role model for those who may read our social media content
- Ensure communications are appropriate to the audience while retaining high professional standards
- Keep posts engaging, conversational, informative, and welcoming

7. Addressing Inappropriate Use

While social media is primarily a tool for positive communication, we recognise that misuse can occur. Examples of inappropriate use include:

- Making allegations about staff, pupils, or parents; cyberbullying
- Lodging complaints about the music service or staff

- Posting defamatory comments about the music service or staff
- Sharing negative/offensive comments about specific pupils, staff, governors, or volunteers
- Posting racist comments or threats of violence

In cases of inappropriate use, we will:

- Delete posts of a negative or derogatory nature
- Direct complaints to official channels as per our Complaints Procedure
- Log offensive, racist, or threatening comments in line with our behaviour, anti-bullying, and safeguarding policies
- Report abusive users through the platform's protocols

For persistent offenders, we may:

- Seek legal advice or action for defamatory content
- Issue written warnings requesting removal of offending material
- Contact law enforcement if criminal activity is suspected
- Restrict access to our social media forums
- Request content removal from the social media platform provider

8. Staff's Personal Use of Social Media

To protect both the music service's reputation and staff members' privacy:

- Use of the music service's name, logo, or materials on personal accounts requires written permission from leadership
- Staff should not post defamatory comments or confidential information about the music service
- Posting images of employees, children, or associates engaged in music service activities on personal accounts is prohibited
- Staff should set personal social media accounts to private and not list pupils as contacts
- Personal contact details should not be shared with pupils
- Staff should not send or accept friend requests from pupils or parents on personal accounts
- Use of social media for personal reasons during work hours is prohibited

9. External Communication

- With parents/carers: Various official channels will be used, including letters, phone calls, email, face-to-face meetings, Microsoft Teams, SpeedAdmin, the website, newsletters, and progress reports. Staff will not use personal accounts or devices to communicate with parents/carers.

11. Monitoring

Music Service social media accounts will be regularly monitored. We commit to responding to comments, queries, or complaints within 24 hours (or the next working day for weekend communications). Consistent monitoring is essential to address any instances of inappropriate behaviour promptly.