

## **HARC SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**HARC** uses social media in its work and recognises that those who are involved in its work may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives. A written policy is therefore required for all staff, volunteers and stakeholders on the acceptable use of social networking at work.

**HARC** encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to set out what HARC expects from our volunteers when using social media. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for the charity and that social media is never private.

This policy is solely for volunteers and aims to:

- give clear guidelines on what volunteers can say about the organisation;
- comply with relevant legislation and protect volunteers;
- help volunteer supervisors manage performance effectively;
- help volunteers draw a line between their private lives and their volunteering;
- protect **HARC** against liability for the actions of volunteers;
- be clear about sensitive issues such as monitoring and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

### **1. Policy statement**

1.1 **HARC** recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our work using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis (*Wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser*) etc. This policy aims to protect individuals volunteering with us in any role and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgment and common sense. (See 2.1)

1.2 Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information and reputation and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of work time and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect volunteers to adhere to this policy.

### **2. Who is covered by the Policy?**

2.1 This policy covers volunteers. There is a separate policy for paid staff, consultants, contractors etc.

### **3. Scope and purpose of the Policy**

3.1 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

3.2 It applies to the use of social media both for volunteering and personal purposes, whether while volunteering or otherwise. 3.3 If a volunteer is found to be in breach of this policy their volunteer supervisor will address this using the Procedures for Problem Solving in Volunteering.

3.4 Volunteers may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy.

3.5 This policy links to all other policies therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equal opportunities, data protection etc.

### **4. Personnel responsible for implementing the Policy**

4.1 All volunteer supervisors have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all volunteers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below this. Volunteers will be told about this during the volunteer training.

4.2 All volunteers are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be reported to the Project Manager/s.

4.3 Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the project managers in line with the reporting procedures outlined in **HARC's** Safeguarding Policy.

### **5. Guidelines for responsible use of social media**

The following sections of the policy provide volunteers with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

5.1 We want you to help protect our business reputation. Volunteers must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:

- a **HARC**;
- b **HARC** staff, our guests, volunteers past or present;
- c suppliers and visitors to the project

Volunteers should also avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our reputation, even indirectly.

5.2 Volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by the masses, including **HARC** colleagues, volunteers, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.

5.3 A publicity consent form must be obtained prior to posting images or text which may be used on social media.

5.4 **HARC** does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18.

5.5 There is no obligation for volunteers to link their personal social media to any **HARC** social media.

5.6 If you disclose your affiliation as a volunteer of **HARC**, you must also state that your views do not represent those of the organisation you are volunteering with. For example, you could state, “the views in this posting do not represent the views of **HARC**.” You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the image you present to those you work with as part of your volunteering role.

5.8 You are responsible for the security settings of any social media sites you use and should ensure they are set to the appropriate level if you wish to limit who can see your information.

5.9 Remember that you must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. You should be mindful of Data Protection issues, if in doubt speak to the Project Manager/s. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information held on our supporters, staff or volunteers.

5.10 Avoid posting comments about sensitive **HARC** related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views do not represent those of our charity, your comments could still damage our reputation.

5.12 If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with your volunteer supervisor.

5.13 If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on **HARC**, you should report it to the Project Manager/s. All volunteers are responsible for protecting our reputation.

5.14 The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your volunteering are regarded as our confidential information, and as such you will be required to delete all such details from your personal social networking accounts, should you finish volunteering with **HARC**.

5.15 Contact details of volunteers are subject to data protection. Staff are not permitted to access or store information on volunteers that would breach data protection.

## **6. Personal use of social media in the office environment**

We recognise that volunteers may occasionally desire to use social media for personal activities in the breakout rooms. We authorise such occasional use during rest breaks so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your volunteering role. If using social media while volunteering, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to **HARC** work is also prohibited.

### **Disclaimer**

*Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However, it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith, without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein.*

**HARC** Charity No: 1049438

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