



Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by staff and volunteers of Autism Bedfordshire. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

Specified Autism Bedfordshire staff and volunteers are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. All other staff and volunteers are required to seek permission to publish news and events related to Autism Bedfordshire from the Development Team. Autism Bedfordshire staff and volunteers are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as a Autism Bedfordshire employee (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to Autism Bedfordshire.)

Before engaging in work related social media, staff and volunteers must obtain the permission of the Development Team. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that Autism Bedfordshire staff and volunteers must otherwise follow. This is in accordance with the relevant data protection laws and our confidentiality agreement and policies and procedures.

Setting up Social Media

Social media identities, logon ID's and user names may not use Autism Bedfordshire's name without prior approval from the Children's Services or Adult's Service Manger.

Your profile on social media sites must be consistent with your profile on the Autism Bedfordshire's website or other Autism Bedfordshire publications. Use of photographs taken during Autism Bedfordshire's activities can only be used with written consent from the Development Team.

Don't Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialogue with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as names of young people and families, personal information about our clients and employees, research, and trade secrets.

We must respect the wishes of our clients and staff regarding the confidentiality of current projects. We must also be mindful of competitiveness. Disclosure of any confidential information should only happen once permission is granted in writing from the individual and then the committee. Breaches of confidentiality will be subject to the disciplinary process.

Protect Your Own Privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information as with audience of the Autism Bedfordshire's website, unless the information should be restricted. Other privacy settings that allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Autism Bedfordshire will be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

When publishing information on your personal page please also refrain from adding young people to your friendship list as this will help to prevent any breach of our safeguarding policies. None of the staff should have or publish photographs of the young people (from either their personal cameras or activity scheme cameras) without the parent/carer and Autism Bedfordshire relevant consents.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for Autism Bedfordshire. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty.

Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Respect Your Audience, Autism Bedfordshire, and Your Co-Workers

The public in general, and Autism Bedfordshire's staff, volunteers and clients, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the Autism Bedfordshire website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully.

This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of Autism Bedfordshire.

Respect Copyright Laws and Terms of Service

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including Autism Bedfordshire's own copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

We hold staff and volunteers responsible for reading, knowing, and complying with the terms of the sites they use. A copy shall be kept in the office for reference as an appendix to this policy.

Protect Autism Bedfordshire's Customers, Working Partners and Suppliers

Clients, partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a client, partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details. It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a client (e.g., Client 123) so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements that may be in place with the customer or make it easy for someone to identify the customer. Your blog is not the place to "conduct business" with a customer.

Working relationships are valuable assets that can be easily severed by thoughtless comments, which can have a massive impact on reputation.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about Autism Bedfordshire in the media, you must notify Autism Bedfordshire. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Don't try to settle scores or goad competitors or others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct. Again it should be clear that these are your own opinions, not those, not those of Autism Bedfordshire unless permission has been given for you to represent the organisation.

Be the First to Respond to Your Own Mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), remove the comment immediately - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action. You must notify Autism Bedfordshire if the matter relates to our work in any way.

Think About Consequences

For example, consider what might happen if an Autism Bedfordshire employee is in a meeting with a parent/carer and pulls out a print-out of your blog and says "This person at Autism Bedfordshire says that activity is rubbish."

Once again, it's all about judgment: using your blog to trash or embarrass Autism Bedfordshire, our customers, or your co-workers, is dangerous and ill-advised. You will be given other

opportunities such as briefings and staff supervisions to express your views. Actions, which damage our reputation, may be subject to a disciplinary.

Disclaimers

Where users identify themselves as staff and volunteers of Autism Bedfordshire, we require 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 Autism Bedfordshire. The Development Team can provide you with applicable disclaimer language and assist with determining where and how to use that.

Don't Forget your Day Job

Make sure that blogging does not interfere with your job or commitment to work. There is a risk that hours of work time could be lost through misuse and distraction. Therefore it is important that each week the site is updated to keep the information fresh however, excessive use is forbidden and during work hours restricted to business use only.

Autism Bedfordshire may duplicate information regarding news and events, once other communications have been sent through the usual routes (post or email). We ask that staff and volunteers always reply to events and requests for information in the traditional way either through telephone, office email or post.

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause.