

Social Media Policy



A comprehensive guide for social media use for The Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD)_channels and for individuals using social media in a personal capacity as a representative of SBTD.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year SBTD will amend this policy, following consultations with the Directors where appropriate.

This policy is intended for all those who work on behalf of the charity; this includes consultants and external agencies. Before engaging in social media activity, you must read this policy, which contains guidance that will help you adhere to our standards.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years



Signed:

Date: 26th March 2026

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the collective term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create, share and interact with content (words, images, graphics and video content), as well as network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.

Why do we use social media and what can we use it for?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating SBTD's work. It is important for designated representatives contractors and volunteers to participate in social media to engage with our audiences and stakeholders, contribute to relevant conversations, and raise the profile of SBTD's work, using the charity's corporate accounts. Some representatives and volunteers may also support the charity's work using their personal accounts, and many will have social media accounts for personal use.

Building an engaged online community can lead to more significant long-term support and involvement from supporters. [Social media guidance from the Charity Commission](#) (September 2023) conveys how social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work.

Social media helps us to:

- Promote our campaigns
- Share our news and updates with our audiences
- Engage in important conversations with stakeholders
- Celebrate our successes
- Raise awareness of important issues and challenges
- Advertise job and volunteering opportunities
- Support our fundraising activities
- Increase our membership
- Build an online supportive community
- Raise our public profile and strengthen our reputation
- React to quickly changing situations and topics

Why do we need a social media policy?

Social media is a fast-moving online world, where nuance and context can be easily lost. While social media brings the charity to a wide audience, it can also present risks. We want to ensure that all representatives and volunteers using social media represent and reflect SBTD in the best way possible. It is also important to mitigate risks (such as reputational or legal issues) associated with the use of social media to protect our supporters, representatives and volunteers, work and reputation.

While we encourage the use of social media to support our communications strategy or plans, we have important standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe and adhere to. The difference between a personal and professional opinion can also be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to SBTD's work. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations and is subject to the same laws as other kinds of publication or commentary in the public domain.

Failure to comply with this policy could expose SBTD to reputational damage as well as putting staff, volunteers, services users and members at risk.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their compliance with this policy.

Participation in social media on behalf of SBTD is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect.

Breaches of policy or inappropriate behaviour may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our Members Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure for further information on our processes. Representatives and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach policies should seek advice from the Directors.

Setting out the social media policy

Application

This policy applies to all social media platforms used by representatives (including consultants, and freelancers) and volunteers (including trustees) in a professional and personal capacity.

This policy also applies to online blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, and messaging based apps, such as WhatsApp. Social media can be accessed in various ways, including from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone. This policy applies to the use of all such devices.

Point of contact for social media and authority to post on SBTD's social media accounts

Our Comms Team are responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have questions about any aspect of these channels, please speak to the Comms Team Lead. No other representatives member or volunteer is permitted to post content on SBTD's official channels without the permission of the Comms Team Lead.

Which social media channels do we use?

SBTD uses the following social media channels:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/weareSBTD>

Facebook Open Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/46932887747>

X: @weareSBTD

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wearesbtd/>

We use our social media accounts to inform and promote the work of SBTD to the community of theatre-makers and general public.

Policy ownership

The Directors are responsible for authoring and updating this document. The policy must be approved by the trustees and reviewed every 2 years, unless a significant change requires the organisation to check the policy before the next review date. All representatives and volunteers will be notified of updates.

Rules for use: headlines

Code of conduct headlines

- I will not insult, harass, bully or intimidate individuals or organisations
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly using provided guidance
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will be considerate, kind and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm to the organisation or to others
- I will champion SBTD and its services

Rules for use: full list

Using SBTD's social media channels – appropriate conduct

1. Know our social media guardians

The Comms Team are responsible for setting up and managing SBTD's social media channels. The Comms Team have overall ownership of these accounts and only those authorised to do so by the Comms Team Lead will have access to these accounts.

The Comms Team will uphold best practices for channel security with secure passwords that regularly change. Never give out the passwords for our channels without express permission from the Comms Team Lead.

2. Be an ambassador for our brand

Representatives and volunteers must ensure they reflect SBTD's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our style that all representatives and volunteers should refer to when posting content on SBTD's social media channels. Please note only the Comms Team is permitted to respond to comments on our social media posts on behalf of the organisation. All posts and comments should be attributed to the charity and not an individual. In special cases it may be appropriate for a representative or volunteer to make an individual comment as themselves, but this should be under the supervision, and with the approval, of the Comms Team.

3. Always pause and think before posting

When posting from SBTD's social media accounts, you must respond to comments in the voice of our charity and not allow your own personal opinions to influence responses. Representatives and volunteers must not reveal their personal opinions via our accounts by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting' as SBTD, unless it is clear that you are doing so as an individual representatives member or volunteer as part of an approach agreed with the Comms Team (e.g. as part of a 'takeover' of the charity's account). If you are in doubt about SBTD's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Comms Team.

4. Ensure brand consistency

Representatives or volunteers must not create or manage any other social media channels, groups or pages on behalf of SBTD without express permission from the Directors and training. This is to ensure brand consistency for users and the appropriate safeguarding and monitoring processes are in place. Refer to the brand guidelines and use the templates provided in the Social Media shared folder.

6. Bring value to our audience(s)

Those responsible for the management of our social media accounts should answer questions as swiftly as possible to help and engage with our service users and supporters.

7. Seek permission to share

If representatives or volunteers outside of the Comms Team wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should obtain guidance and permission from the Directors.

8. Obtain consent

Representatives and volunteers must not post content about supporters, service users or partners without their, or their guardian's, express permission. If representatives or and volunteers 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 SBTB. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, representatives and volunteers must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

9. Put safety first

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where representatives or volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the charity, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media on behalf of the charity to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse and consult with the Comms Team Lead where necessary.

It is also vital that SBTB does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials in pursuit of social media engagement. For example, a video of a stunt or visiting an unsafe location.

10. Stick to the law

Representatives and volunteers must 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.

11. Remain politically neutral

SBTB is not associated with any political organisation or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We can express views where appropriate on policies that impact our work and service users, but it is essential that SBTB remains, and is seen to be, politically neutral.

We cannot endorse a political party or candidate. We must carefully manage the risk that we are perceived to have any party-political bias and should carefully consider any posts which might be perceived as such, for example, posts which talk about individual politicians or parties rather than policies. Please refer to our Equality and Diversity Policy for further information.

12. Check facts and be honest

Representatives and volunteers should not automatically assume that material that's shared or included in any post is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification – for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. But think first about how to manage any risk to the charity and its brand in doing so by consulting with the Directors to craft the response.

13. Seek advice for complaints

If a complaint is made on SBTB's social media channels, representatives and volunteers should seek advice from the Comms Team Lead before responding. If they are not available, then representatives and volunteers should speak to the Directors.

15. Timings, schedules and rotas

We do not have a fixed schedule for posts. Please use the shared scheduling app so you are aware of when posts are scheduled to be published.

17. Handover ownership if your role changes

You must hand over ownership of the group/page/account you manage to another appropriate representatives member (or volunteer) if you change roles or if you leave SBTB.

Use of personal social media accounts – appropriate conduct

Personal social media use by Representatives and volunteers representatives and volunteers can sometimes be attributed to the charity or bring other risks for the charity or individual representatives or volunteers. This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media, but instead flags up those areas in which risks or conflicts might arise. SBTB representatives and volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are considerate of SBTB's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Separate your personal views

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

2. Take care when publishing personal views (particularly trustees and committee members)

Representatives, including trustees and public-facing or specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing SBTB's view.

3. Discuss risks and conflicts of interest

Representatives, volunteers and trustees who have a personal blog, social media profile or website which indicates in any way that they work at SBTB should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with the Directors. Similarly, representatives or trustees who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for SBTB should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with the Directors.

4. Protect your personal reputation

Think about your personal 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 the first to correct your own mistakes.

Remember that if you have a public profile with the charity, your personal social media accounts could be looked at by critics of the charity, and bear this in mind when posting.

5. Use your common sense and good judgement

Be aware of your association with SBTB and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, partners and funders.

7. Refer press enquiries

If a representative or volunteer is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to SBTB, they should talk to the Directors immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

9. Protect your privacy

Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. Remember that a simple 'like' can draw attention to your personal accounts. What you publish is widely accessible and could be around for a long time, so do consider the content, and your privacy, carefully.

In their own interests, representatives and volunteers should be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers.

10. Help us to raise our profile (where appropriate)

We encourage representatives and volunteers to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support SBTD and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy (and taking into consideration the information above), we encourage representatives and volunteers to do this as it helps users connect to us and raises our profile.

However, please take care to think about the reputation of the charity. If your personal social media account is not professional or otherwise appropriate for our audiences, please do not use it to amplify or promote the charity, as to do so brings risks both to you personally and to the charity.

12. Staying safe online

It can be challenging working on social media and there may be times where representatives and volunteers could be subject to unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the charity, our work or people. We encourage everyone who is on social media to be aware of our safeguarding and wellbeing practices to deal with online abuse and consult with the Comms Team Lead where necessary.

Representatives and volunteers should be vigilant regarding suspicious content or links and must not reveal personal, confidential or sensitive information about themselves, other representatives, members, volunteers or supporters of SBTD. Representatives and volunteers should be wary of fake accounts that may claim to be SBTD and should immediately notify the Comms Team Lead.

Care must also be taken to ensure that any links to external sites from our social media accounts are appropriate and safe. For more information, please see our data protection policy.

Further guidelines: using social media in a professional & personal capacity

Defamation

Defamation is when a false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published in print (such as in media publications) or online (such as Instagram Story, Facebook Live, Snapchat post). Whether representatives or volunteers are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring SBTD into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all representatives or volunteers abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, when representing the charity. 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 representatives and volunteers make must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that SBTD is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date, or information from people who the charity has worked with which is private.

Discrimination and harassment

Representatives and volunteers should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official SBTD 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.

Accessibility

In line with SBTD's equity, diversity and inclusion policy, we endeavour to ensure our social media is as accessible as possible. This includes:

- Using plain English, accessible fonts and avoiding small text sizes
- Using contrasting colours
- Using subtitles where appropriate
- Using alt text for videos and images
- Explaining text contained in an image in the copy that accompanies it

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with standard recruitment policy, and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through the Directors and promoted through approved channels.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidates' online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision.

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 representatives member or volunteer considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Comms Team 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 or radicalisation. Where known, when communicating with vulnerable or young people under 18-years-old via social media, representatives and volunteers should ensure the online relationship with SBTD follows the same rules as offline.

Representatives and volunteers should be aware that children under the age of 13 should not be encouraged to create their own personal social media accounts or engage with others and are not legally allowed to use social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram or X.

Representatives and volunteers should ensure that vulnerable and young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online and given guidance on security and privacy settings as necessary. Representatives and volunteers should also ensure

that the site itself is suitable for the vulnerable or young person and SBTD content and other content is appropriate for them.

The Online Safety Act 2003 has introduced measures to ensure children are protected online.

Further external guidance

- [The Charity Commission guidance for charities on social media](#)
- [The Charity Commission checklist for developing a social media policy](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre's guidance on social media and how to use it safely](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre's guidance on protecting your published content](#)
- [The Charity Commission guidance on campaigning and political activity guidance for charities](#)
- [Government guidance on the Online Safety Bill](#)
- [Bates Wells website](#)