



# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for parents, students, and staff (including freelance tutors, mentors, and house parents) on using social media to promote the work of South West Music School and in a personal capacity.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. South West Music School will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

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South West Music School is a charity (**Number 1138482**)

**Company number – 07307202**

South West Music School (SWMS) is a Centre of Advanced Training (CAT) for Music which is part funded by the Department for Education (DfE) We offer extra-curricular activity at weekends and school holidays.

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# Introduction

## What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images, and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge, and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

## Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating South West Music School's work. It is important to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of South West Music School's work.

## Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to South West Music School's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for everyone involved with South West Music School [i.e. staff, volunteers, trustees, parents, and students]. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy. Similarly, we request parents and students to be aware of these guidelines.

## Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of South West Music School and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help all those involved with SWMS to support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

## Internet access and monitoring usage

When using the internet for SWMS work purposes, it is important that staff refer to the SWMS Policy handbook and the SWMS Safeguarding Young People Policy document.

## Point of contact for social media

Tracy Hill (SWMS General Manager) is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to Tracy. No other staff member can post content on South West Music School's official channels without the permission of the General Manager.

## Which social media channels do we use?

South West Music School uses the following social media channels:

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

## Policy Guidelines

### Using South West Music School's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. South West Music School's General Manager, Tracy Hill, is responsible for setting up and managing South West Music School's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the General Manager will have access to these accounts.
2. All individuals connected with South West Music School (parents, students, staff, mentors, tutors, trustees) are ambassadors for our brand. They should ensure they reflect South West Music School values in responding to official social media posts and respect all associated with our activities.
3. If staff outside of South West Music School wish to contribute content for social media (mentors, tutors, trustees), whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to Tracy Hill in advance of posting. All those associated with South West Music School are encouraged to read our Safeguarding Policies.
4. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the written consent of a parent or guardian before using them on

social media. Social media consent forms are sent out to all parents/carers at the start of each academic year.

## **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.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with South West Music School follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff and parents should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and South West Music School content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to SWMS Safeguarding Young People Policy.

## **Social Media Posts in relation to South West Music School activities**

We encourage all those connected with South West Music School to follow our social media and help promote our activities and opportunities. However, please refer to the following guidance when posting online with relation to South West Music School, our activities and all those associated with the charity:

- Students and parents are asked not to make public social media posts with images or videos taken during school activities without permission from SWMS General Manager, Tracy Hill.
- The school cannot be held responsible for improper use of social media by students or parents. Personal interaction through social media between students outside of South West Music School time is the responsibility of students, parents/carers.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to monitor their child's activity on social media.

***If you do not wish your child's name or photograph to be used in connection with South West Music School's official social media platforms, websites, or PR, you must advise the school at the beginning of each academic year on the form provided.***

## **The use of social media platforms to highlight concerns and complaints**

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest ways to express frustrations or concerns), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Queries, concerns, and complaints should be made to the school directly via telephone or email.

The school considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites.

- Making allegations about pupils at SWMS/cyber bullying.
- Making complaints about SWMS/those involved with SWMS.
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at SWMS.
- Posting comments considered to be of national, racial, sexual, or religious hatred.
- Posting comments which threaten violence.
- Posting comments that are likely to be divisive, offensive, or inflammatory, such as overt political and social views, hate speech, terrorism and other illegal or immoral activities.

South West Music School will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner. South West Music School should be a safe place where relationships between staff, parents and students demonstrates a mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for welfare and educational progress.

We want to work with our parents and students to ensure that the school is a safe place for all. If you have any concerns, then we encourage you to contact the school directly to initiate an open and constructive discussion to ensure the best resolution for all concerned. However, please be aware that as an out of school provider, our responsibilities are limited.

## **Breaches of this policy**

Any breach of this policy that leads to a breach of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of South West Music School or any illegal acts or acts that render SWMS liable to third parties may result in legal action, disciplinary action or sanctions in line with the School's policies.

## **Evaluation**

Breaches of this policy will be reported as necessary to the Trustees. The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, considering the latest advice, good practice and technology available.