



Social Media & Electronic Communications Policy

Policy Overview

Distington Big Local (DBL) uses social media in its work and recognises that those who are involved in its work such as Board members, providers of projects or services, workers, volunteers and other stakeholders, 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 members on the acceptable use of social networking at work.

Distington Big Local encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to set out what Distington Big Local (DBL) Board expects from our volunteers when using social media. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for the organisation and that social media is never private.

This policy is for employees, the board members, all volunteers and other stakeholders working on behalf of or in support of Distington Big Local and it aims to:

- Give everyone clear guidelines on what is appropriate to say about our organisation;
- Comply with relevant legislation and protect all stakeholders;
- Helps everyone to draw a line between their private lives and their engagement with DBL;
- Protects Distington Big Local against liability for the actions of other stakeholders;
- Be clear about sensitive issues such as monitoring and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

1. Policy statement

1.1 Distington Big Local recognises that the internet provides a unique opportunity 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, DBL website, twitter and any other social media sites. ***This policy aims to protect individuals volunteering or working***

*Distington Big Local Ltd
Written by Danielle Leigh 28.01.22*

with us in any role and to encourage them to take responsibility for what they write, exercising 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 everyone involved with DBL to adhere to this policy.

2. Who is covered by the Policy?

2.1 This policy covers all board members, volunteers, staff and anyone involved within Distington Big Local.

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, Instagram and all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

3.2 It applies to the use of social media for purposes of work, volunteering and personal purposes, and applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to individuals or other organisations.

3.3 If someone is found to be in breach of this policy the DBL members will address this and discuss with the other board members what to do next

3.4 There may be a requirement 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 board members have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all individuals understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below this.

4.2 Everyone is 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 members and business support

4.3 Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to Christine Pattinson, our Safeguarding Point of Contact, who will act appropriately in line with the reporting procedures outlined in Distington Big Local's Safeguarding Policy.

5. Guidelines for responsible use of social media

The following sections of the policy provides common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely. The accessing or distribution of offensive, illegal or unsuitable material is unacceptable and subject to disciplinary/legal action which may result in prosecution.

Offensive material is anything which is abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting. The persistent abuse of power, or the belittling of someone, either in public or private, which makes them feel upset, threatened, humiliated, vulnerable or undermines their self-confidence, through the use of Information Technology is unacceptable and will be deemed to be bullying or harassment.

5.1. To help protect our reputation both locally and nationally it is expected that there is no posting of disparaging or defamatory statements about:

- Distington Big Local;
- Distington Big Local staff, our DBL community, volunteers or members past or present;
- Suppliers, third parties and vendors; and
- Other affiliates and stakeholders.

Social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our organisational reputation, even if it's indirectly should be avoided.

5.2 Individuals 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 Distington Big Local), colleagues, volunteers, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.

5.3 Consent must be obtained prior to posting images or text which may be used on social media. An authority should be signed by those groups/sub groups/Individuals who we may use data on social media to ensure they agree for the information to be used by Distington Big Local.

5.4 Distington Big Local does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18 without prior consent.

5.5 There is no obligation for staff, Board Members or other volunteers to link their personal social media to any Distington Big Local social media.

5.6 Any other social media accounts relating to the programme purposes should only happen after consultation with an agreement by the board members.

5.7 If you disclose your affiliation to Distington Big Local you must also state that your views do not represent those of the organisation. For example, you could state, “the views in this posting do not represent the views of Distington Big Local. 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 role with DBL.

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 ALWAYS respect confidentiality and protect confidential information. You should be mindful of Data Protection issues, if in doubt ALWAYS speak to the Board members or business support. Confidential information can include 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 Distington Big Local related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views do not represent those of our organisation, your comments could still damage our reputation. It is always best to take any questions or criticism up with the Board directly.

5.11 If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with the business support or the Board members.

5.12 If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on Distington Big Local or our members, you should report it to a member of the board or the business support. Everyone is responsible for protecting our reputation.

5.13 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 Distington Big Local.

5.14 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 individuals may occasionally desire to use social media for personal activities in the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. 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 role. You should not use Distington Big Local IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential.

If using social media while engaged on DBL programme work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations is also prohibited.

7. Electronic Communications

This part of the policy addresses the use of electronic communications by all within Distington Big Local and will apply to all volunteers, employees, consultants, contractors or anyone involved within Distington Big Local.

It is every employee's responsibility to:

- Read and comply with the requirements of the policy.
- Report any breaches of this code e.g. misuse of e-mail, Internet, telephones etc.

7.1 Electronic Communications and the Law

The most relevant legislation regulating electronic communications are:

- The Data Protection Act 2018 (relating to the use of personal information)
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990 (relating to unauthorised access and creation or distribution of computer viruses)
- The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 (which relates to unauthorised copying often referred to as software piracy)

Breach of any of the above can constitute a criminal offence. Where the Board believes a criminal offence has taken place, it has a duty to inform the Police.

7.2 Email Use

Please be aware that personally sensitive information should not be sent by email. Messages should not contain anything that others may find offensive or distasteful. Examples of material that is not permitted are those with a sexual content, jokes or chain letters etc.

If you receive messages which breach this policy from another member or volunteer, then you should do the following:

- If you know the sender, reply advising them that Distington Big Local Policy prohibits that type of message and ask them not to send any more similar messages.
- If the message is from another board member, then contact business support.

*Distington Big Local Ltd
Written by Danielle Leigh 28.01.22*

- If the message is from outside Distington Big Local and you do not know the sender then advise DBL Board members/Business Support who can arrange to have messages from specified senders blocked.

Such material may for example not be identifiable until the e-mail is opened and, in these cases, individuals will not be held responsible provided that they report it immediately. These items should never be passed on to other members or individuals

8.0 Leaving Distington Big Local

On leaving Distington Big Local you must return all equipment, including laptops, handsets (including SIM cards), chargers and handsfree equipment). All accounts and emails should be logged out of, and the details returned to existing trustee.