



# **SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

A guide for Authorised Moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Committee and Council Members on using social media to promote the work of British Skydiving and in a personal capacity

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. British Skydiving will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: 16/07/2019

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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 British Skydiving's core messaging, its values, competitions, events, news to members, stakeholders and the public and decisions passed by the council that have a direct effect on the membership and the sport. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of British Skydiving.

### **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 British Skydiving. 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 all staff members of all levels, volunteers (Judges, Examiners etc), Committee and Council members, and applies to content posted on both a British skydiving device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, authorised moderators must read this policy.

### **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 British Skydiving, 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 staff support and expand our official social media channels while protecting the association and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Volunteers, discipline reps and those deemed as authorised moderators by the Communications Manger may at times be added as an event administrator on a British Skydiving social media channel for the purposes of moderation, addition of relevant information and/or administration relating to said event.

### **Point of contact for social media**

Our Communications 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 the Communications Manager. No other staff member, volunteer, Council or Committee member can post content on British Skydiving's official channels without the permission of the Communications Manager.

### **Which social media channels do we use?**

British Skydiving uses the following social media channels:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/BritishParachuteAssociation>

<https://www.facebook.com/BritishSkydiving/>

British Skydiving has a Facebook account which it uses to share news with members, the general public and to encourage people to become involved in our sport. All posts and comments should be factual, informative and with a tone that conveys credibility. The audience is made up of members, skydivers and the general public predominately in the 25-44 age range. 74% are male.

<https://www.facebook.com/BPASkydivetheMag/>

*Skydive The Mag* has a Facebook account which it uses to share news about the magazine with members. Posts on this channel are slightly less formal and can include skydiving related Memes which have proven to drive engagement. 25-54 age range. 73% are male.

<https://www.facebook.com/SkydiveTheExpo/>

Skydive the Expo has a Facebook account which it uses to share news with members to encourage them to attend the annual expo. All posts and comments should be factual, informative and with a less formal tone than the main Facebook pages. The audience is made up of members and skydivers predominately in the 25-44 age range. 72% are male.

<https://twitter.com/britparaassoc/>

<https://twitter.com/skydivetehmag/>

British Parachute Association has 2 Twitter account which it uses to share news with the general public. All tweets and comments on the BPA Twitter feed should be factual, informative and with a formal tone that conveys credibility. Tweets on Skydive the Mag Twitter feed can be less formal and can include skydiving Memes Posts should be written for Twitter and not copied directly from Facebook.

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/locations/1026556666/bpa-skydive-the-expo>

Skydive the Expo has an Instagram account which it uses to share pictures with members to encourage them to attend the annual expo. Photos are also uploaded at the event and throughout the evening Instagram provides a less formal and aspirational tone.

## Guidelines

### **Using British Skydiving's social media channels — appropriate conduct**

1. The Communications Manager is responsible for setting up and managing British Skydiving's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Communications Manager will have access to these accounts.
2. The Communications Manager responds and moderates' comments Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. On evenings and weekends, we have social media out-of-hours ad-hoc rota, covered by the Communications Manager and by approved moderators.
3. All approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members are ambassadors for the British Skydiving brand and should ensure that they reflect British Skydiving values when referring to any subject on behalf of British Skydiving. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that should be referred to when posting content on British Skydiving's social media channels.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for British Skydiving, adheres to the cores values and accurately reflects the agreed position of any policy or strategic decision as agreed by the council.

Sharing content from other sites is permissible if it is informative, educational and in line with British Skydiving values. Any shared content, news articles, videos, photos etc need to adhere to the regulations as set out in the Operations Manual and must present the sport in a positive light.

Just as important is where the link is coming from. Sharing news stories from local news outlets about members competition achievements is acceptable. There are several media publications that are to be avoided, sharing a positive story from one of the tabloids and sensationalist publications might appear to be acceptable at the time but would give the impression that British Skydiving is providing endorsement to the publisher. These very same publications have no issue in providing inaccurate information or tarnishing the name of the sport and association when there is an incident.

Websites and publications to avoid:

- Daily Express
- Daily Mail / Mail on Sunday
- Daily Mirror
- Daily Star
- Metro
- The Sun
- The Telegraph

5. Advertising or promotion of non-BPA or IPC events and/or products is forbidden, any such links are to be moderated and removed by the Communications Manager.

6. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.

7. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings, inappropriate language or grammatical errors.

Image quality must be in a suitable size and resolution for the purpose it is intended. All photos and video must comply with the Operations Manual, i.e. correct equipment, weather conditions, etc. Please refer to the Communications Manager if you are unsure.

8. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

9. All approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members should not post content about members or stakeholders without their express permission. When sharing information about members, stakeholders or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from British Skydiving. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person the consent of a parent or guardian via a signed release form is required before posting them on social media.

10. Always check facts. Do not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

12. All approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members should refrain from offering personal opinions via British Skydiving's social media accounts. If you are in doubt about British Skydiving's position on a particular subject please speak to the Communications Manager, if further advice is needed from the Secretary, Safety & Technical Officer, Chief Operating Officer or the Council, the Communications Manager will make representation.

13. It is vital that British Skydiving does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a skydive that does not comply with the Operations Manual

14. British Skydiving should 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.

15. All approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of British Skydiving. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Communications Manager can ensure the consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. British Skydiving is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we cannot tell people how to vote.

17. If a complaint is made on British Skydiving's social media channels, approved moderators should seek advice from the Communications Manager before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the Communications Chair or Chairman.

18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the Association's reputation. Examples might include: the release of contentious information through unprepared statements. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the Association.

The Communications Manager regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of British Skydiving so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, the Communications Manager will do the following:

- Follow the Crisis Management Flowchart to analyse the posts/comments and grade the severity
- Pause all planned and automated social posts
- Moderate any offensive or defamatory comments
- Respond in a timely manner that the issue is being looked into
- Seek advice from the appropriate person if the response requires specialist knowledge
- Prepare a statement for distribution. If severity requires, further consultation will be sought from the Chief Operating Officer, Safety & Technical Officer or Chair

If any approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members outside of the Communications team become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on British Skydiving's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Communications Manager immediately.

### **Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct**

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. All approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with British Skydiving's values and policies, both online and in real life.

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

2. All approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, Volunteers, Council and Committee Members who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at British Skydiving should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Communications Manager. Similarly, all approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for British Skydiving should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Communications Manager so that it can be raised at committee.

3. Those in senior management and 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 British Skydiving's view.

4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with British Skydiving and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, members, stakeholders and colleagues.

5. If an approved moderator, British Skydiving staff member, volunteer, Council and Committee Member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to British Skydiving, they should talk to the Communications Manager immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

6. British Skydiving is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing British Skydiving, staff are expected to hold British Skydiving's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from British Skydiving and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

7. Never use British Skydiving's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Communications Manager.

8. Always protect yourself and the association. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely. You can find more information on your responsibilities when using our computer systems as set out in the IT Policy and Guidelines.

9. Think about your reputation as well as that of British Skydiving. 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 polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

10. We encourage staff to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support British Skydiving and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Communications Manager who will respond as appropriate.

## Further guidelines

### **Libel**

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring British Skydiving into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

## **Copyright law**

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. 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 staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that British Skydiving is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

## **Discrimination and harassment**

Approved moderators, British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Council and Committee Members should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official British Skydiving 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

## **Use of social media in the recruitment process**

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Recruitment Policy, and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done through HR and the Communications Manager. Vacancies will be shared routinely on Facebook and LinkedIn.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's 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. This is in line with British Skydiving's Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **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 staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Communications Manager 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.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, approved moderators should ensure the online relationship with British Skydiving follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Approved moderators should ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and British Skydiving content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

## **Responsibilities and breach of policy**

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of British Skydiving is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For British Skydiving staff, volunteers, Committee and Council Members breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our HR policy for further

information on disciplinary procedures. If you are unsure about whether something you propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Communications Manager.

## Social Media Crisis Management Flowchart

Please refer to Form 321 Social Media Crisis Management Flowchart