The Royal Institution
Science Lives Here

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

STATUS: Approved

Policy Owner: Head of Digital, Marketing and Communication

Date approved: 24 September 2024   **Next Review Date:** September 2026

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1   Purpose

1.1   The purpose of this policy is that Ri staff and representatives understand how and why the Ri uses social media and to establish clear guidelines on professional and personal use. It aims to support safe and effective use of social media.

1.2.   It aims to ensure that all staff understand how they can help protect the Ri's reputation and prevent any legal issues when using social media.

2   Scope

2.1.   This policy applies to any person employed by or representing the Ri in a professional capacity whether in a paid or voluntary role.

2.2.   References to staff in this policy refer equally to anyone representing the Ri:

- **Sections 6 & 7:**   address **staff managing the Ri social media accounts;**
- **Section 8:**   is for **staff involved in filming, photographing** etc.
- **Section 9**:   is for **all staff** and those representing the Ri, and covers personal social media use

2.3.   This policy covers the use of social media for both charitable and commercial activities, as well as personal social media accounts.

3   Context

3.1   All references to 'social media' refer to any websites or applications (apps) where users can create and share content (text, images and video) and network with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram.

3.2.   The Ri manages two types of social media channels:
- Channels for our charitable activities
- Channels for our commercial Venue Hire activities (RiGB Ltd)

3.3.   Social media helps us achieve our mission, vision and our strategic objectives by creating opportunities to bring scientists and the public together in a public setting.

4   Governance and Responsibilities

4.1.   Trustees are responsible for reviewing this policy annually. Managers are responsible for disseminating the policy and procedures. All staff are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

4.2.   The Digital Team are responsible for the management of the Ri's social media channels.
- The Director of Fundraising, Marketing, Communications and Digital (FMCD) is responsible for marketing and communications via all Ri digital media
- The Head of Digital, Marketing and Communications has strategic oversight of the Ri's social media activities
- The Social Media Manager and Senior Marketing Manager are responsible for the day-to-day management of all charitable Ri social media channels
- The Venue Hire team are responsible for managing all Ri commercial (RIGB Ltd) social media channels, with oversight from the Digital team

4.3   No other staff can post content on the Ri's official social media channels without the permission of the Social Media Manager, Senior Marketing Manager or Head of Digital and Marketing who additionally are responsible for ensuring removal of posts where deemed necessary and/or in the best interests of the Ri. This may include removal where adverts are posted alongside Ri content.

5   Policy statement

5.1. The Ri has a duty to:

- Ensure staff managing social media have a clear understanding of the appropriate use, content and style of activity
- Comply with all legal requirements particularly with reference to the law on discrimination, data protection and copyright
- Protect the health and safety of staff who use social media in their work
- Protect the Ri against liability for the actions of staff using social media.

6   Staff managing official social media channels

6.1.   The Ri's official social media channels are actively monitored from 9.00am – 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.

6.2.   The Digital and Marketing Team working alongside IT are responsible for setting up all social media accounts, ensuring:

- There is a strategic objective and audience need for any new channel unmet by an existing channel
- Relevant teams are consulted and informed before the channel is set up
- A realistic plan is in place to maintain the channel, keep it updated and measure its success against the Ri's strategic objectives and impact
- Any new channel makes correct and appropriate use of the Ri brand
- There is an up-to-date list of all social media channels and log in details
- The channel is managed in the context of other relevant Ri policies
- Details of all new social media accounts and related access information are passed on to IT to be recorded in accordance with the Application Register and related policies

6.4   All official social media postings must reflect the Ri's values, brand guidelines, and style guide where appropriate to the platform and target audience.

6.5   All content must provide benefit to the Ri, be aligned to one or more of the Ri's strategic objectives and accurately reflect the Ri's agreed position.

6.6   All content should be accessible. Images should be of a suitable quality with ALT text provided. Any concerns about the factual accuracy or suitability of content should be raised with Head of Digital and Marketing or Director of FMCD, who will advise on whether it requires fact checking.

6.7   Ri channels are not to be used to share personal opinions.

6.9   The Ri's Social Media Incident Management Procedure must be followed to ensure:
   - Complaints or criticisms do not escalate into crisis
   - Crisis situations are handled efficiently and effectively

7.   Ri official social media accounts: Security and data management

7.1   Only staff authorised by the Head of Digital and Marketing, Senior Marketing Manger or the Social Media Manager will have access to official Ri social media accounts.

7.2   Passwords and usernames must not be shared except with staff and authorised to use official accounts.

7.3   As a minimum, social media passwords and usernames will be reviewed at least every six months. When staff leave the Ri, accounts are deleted and passwords updated as appropriate.

7.4   No personal information (as defined in the Data Protection Policy) should be shared on the Ri's official social media channel without permission being obtained.

7.5   Permission must be obtained when sharing photographs or videos of anyone featured on our website. For adults, that permission is normally implicit, as it is included in the terms and conditions of ticket sales. Where permission has not already been implicitly obtained, written permission is required before the image is publicly shared.

7.6   Images of children i.e. anyone aged 17 and under should not be shared without the express written permission of a parent or guardian. Children aged 16-18 years should additionally consent. Where older children withdraw consent, images should not be used.

7.7   Even with written permission, we **only** ever share a child's name **or** school on social media alongside their photograph (**never both**).

7.8   No content may be shared from public-facing social media accounts (e.g. X 'retweets') if this would result in sharing third-party personal information.

8   All staff involved in planning and/or photographing, filming and/or recording

8.1   This section applies to all staff who are photographing, filming or recording anyone who may be a child (aged under 18) or an adult at risk of harm and should be read alongside the Ri Safeguarding policies and procedures.

8.2   For Ri workshop events, written and signed permission must be obtained prior to any filming or photography. Children's participation in the event must not be impacted by their opt-in or opt-out status for filming and photography.

8.3   Images recorded at Ri events are for official Ri use only and not to be used separately on personal social media accounts except for the sharing unaltered

official content (i.e. forwarding or sharing Ri social media posts).

8.4   If a child is selected for filming or photography during an event, e.g. taking part in a demo or by asking a question, the agreement to be filmed or photographed included in the Ri Event Terms and Conditions is not sufficient and additional written permission must be obtained. See 8.5 for livestreamed/hybrid events.

8.5   **Hybrid and livestreamed events:** where not possible to obtain signed release forms in advance:
- The event Terms and Conditions and a pre-event announcement must make clear to attendees that anyone asking questions or taking part in demos etc. may be featured
- Should avoid showing close-ups of children where possible. e.g. not featuring them on camera when they ask a question
- Livestream footage featuring children must be removed from any publicly available platforms no later than one week after the event
- Signed release forms must be obtained to feature children in any subsequent footage to be released on YouTube or social media

8.6   **Large events (e.g. Family Fun days):** where not possible to obtain signed release forms in advance, Event Terms and Conditions must make clear that filming or photography may take place. All attendees must be given choice to opt-out, (e.g. by wearing an Ri provided sticker).

8.7   **Masterclass guidance:** Masterclass volunteers have separate guidance. Where Masterclass guidance differs, this policy will take precedence.

9   All staff: Personal social media

9.1   Everyone should be aware that if they can be identified as working for or representing the Ri, that there is a risk that any post could damage the Ri's reputation, as well as their own.

9.2   As well as stating their position at the Ri, people may also reveal this by:
- posting pictures of themselves at work
- following fellow staff
- discussing their work.

9.3   This table summarises dos and don'ts when posting on personal social media accounts. **If in doubt, ask before you post or share.**

Don't	Do
Share or promote - inflammatory, abusive, discriminatory language or hate speech - language that could be seen to be bullying and/or harassment - content in breach of U.K. law including defamation, libel, copyright - illegal activity (e.g. terrorism, violence) - anything that could damage the Ri's reputation or brand - disinformation	Remember, anything shared or posted is public and could be seen as an endorsement of a particular point of view **Consider how posts look** from outside to colleagues, stakeholders etc, and think about how your profiles and content reflect Ri values when referring to your work with the Ri **Fact check** content. Correct errors without delay and post that a mistake was made
Use the Ri brand to promote products or political opinions or use the **Ri logo or branding** in a way that resembles or suggests official Ri accounts or posts	Make clear opinions are your own

Expect any **disclaimer** you write to override this policy or mean that it will not be associated with the Ri	
State 'the Ri believes/thinks'	Use your own voice
Share **confidential or private Ri information** (marked as such or otherwise) or identify colleagues without their permission Use information not yet in the public domain including about staff, Trustees etc. Share information about Ri **processing of donations or financial transactions**	Check content is **legal,** respects Ri copyright or intellectual property and is **suitable for the public domain** **Ask permission** to post Ri copyright material
Record or share personal information including **photo's, video or voice recording** from Ri activities or events that could identify any other person without written permission Record anything at any Ri event or activity where filming/photography is not allowed Ask **members of the public at Ri events/activities** for their personal permission to appear in your personal social media posts	Remember that consent given to the Ri to record or share personal information is not the same as consent being given to you personally **Ask permission** from event managers or venue hire clients before recording any images or voices. Permission must be gained in writing. If permitted to film, videos must be under 2 minutes duration Post pictures of Ri public spaces that don't compromise any other people's privacy
Make **professional disagreements** public via social media	Be **considerate and respectful** to colleagues; deal with internal matters professionally and privately, not on social media
Leave problems with personal social media unreported	**Ask for help and support** to deal with Ri associated negative attention from Digital and/or HR teams as soon as possible

10   Reporting and monitoring

10.1   Anyone working with or for the Ri who is subject to aggressive behaviour on social media, including 'pile-ons' (an attack by a large group of people) or 'doxing' (identifying information being revealed publicly online without permission), should inform the Ri's Digital Team and HR Team as soon as possible for advice and support.

10.2   If staff believe that any Ri social media account has been hacked, it must be reported to the Head of Digital, Marketing & Communications and Head of IT immediately. They will take the necessary steps for investigating, escalating to Directors and/or Trustees where appropriate and, if necessary, changing passwords and/or closing the account.

10.3   It is the policy of the Ri that all serious events, incidents and reports are escalated to the Audit and Risk Committee, and where necessary Trustees without delay in accordance with the Social Media Crisis Management Procedure.

10.4   Any Ri staff found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary proceedings which could result in a warning or in serious cases, dismissal. Staff should refer to the relevant sections of the staff handbook for further information. Known misuse of social media or breaches must be reported without delay.

10.5   Volunteers, contractors and all others representing the Ri found to have breached this policy may lose their contract to work with the Ri and have a duty to report known misuse of social media or breaches without undue delay.

10.6   The Trustee Code of Conduct applies to all Ri Committee members and Trustees. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the process set out in the Code.

11   **Relevant/ linked policy, procedures or forms**

Ri staff and representatives should familiarise themselves with the following policies:

- Computer Acceptable Use policy & Bring your own device policy
- Data Protection policy
- Donations Acceptance policy
- Safeguarding Policies for Children and Adults at Risk
- The Application Register (applies to staff managing social media accounts and IT staff)
- Social Media Crisis Management Procedure
- Ri Brand Guidelines
- Ri Style Guide
- Ri Event Terms and Conditions
- Ri Values (applies to staff managing social media accounts)
- Photography, Video and Social Media Guidance for Ri Masterclasses (applies to Masterclasses only)
- Trustee Code of Conduct