

## Statement of purpose

### Most of us use social media in our lives.

For all of us, social media is a great way to spread the word about what we do in the VPC. You can use it to talk with other staff, young people and parents/carers; to share stories and inspire each other; to communicate important news and information or to shout out about our events.

There are loads of fantastic ways social media benefits us but best of all, it can help give us all a voice - which is what the VPC is all about.

It's important to remember that when you discuss anything relating to the VPC or wider issues on social media, you are representing our organisation, and what you say can reflect on the wider VPC

This Social Media policy explains our expectations of our staff, parents/carers, young people and volunteers in terms of what you post on social media. It relates to all social media including:

- Where it is specifically identified as the VPC such as Facebook page or Twitter account
- Where it is an adult's personal account and they are identifying themselves as a volunteer or member of staff of the VPC for example, referring to themselves as a leader to an activity they have been involved in; or the content amounts to a crime, for example comments which are racist
- A closed or private group

Of course, common sense is often the best way of deciding whether your post is a good idea to share online. Would you share it with your parents for instance? Or with the younger people you work with? Does your post reflect our values?

Your Force Social Media policy will guide your decisions and you must make sure you follow it. Ultimately you must follow our Code of Conduct online as well as offline and communicate with others in an open and respectful way.

### Definitions

**Social Media** - A type of interactive online media that allows people to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Linked In, YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat and WhatsApp but adult volunteers and young leaders should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area.

**Breach** - Not following or meeting expectations set out in our Code of Conduct or Policies or Procedures.

**Defamatory** - Written statements that damage the good reputation of someone else.

**Bullying** - Using your position of influence to intimidate someone.

## Our expectations

All VPC leaders, staff and young people using social media must meet the following expectations:

1. Code of Conduct, our policies and procedures. Our Code of Conduct expects that you follow UK legislation. For example, you must not:
  - Place a child or adult at risk
  - Post content which is illegal
  - Use the social media channel to commit a crime
2. Social media provides a great platform for positive debate and constructive feedback, including about the VPC. We work together to promote VPC's mission and values. Therefore, you must not:
  - Make statements that may damage the reputation of the VPC
  - Be disrespectful of parents/carers, staff colleagues, volunteers, partners, suppliers or competitors in a social media space.
  - Publicly engage in debate where there are alternative, more appropriate channels or spaces to be used e.g. for complaints follow the complaints process; where a discussion is sensitive or becomes acrimonious this should happen privately.
3. Keep VPC confidentiality, respect others' privacy and follow Data Protection. For example, do not:
  - Reveal confidential intellectual property or information owned by the VPC or funder, or future business plans/partnerships that have not been publicly communicated
  - Give away confidential information about an individual (such as a young person's contact) or organisation (such as a partner or supplier)
  - Post or threaten to post images of someone without their consent; for cadets, you must comply with permissions given on the starting form
4. Be respectful of others, treating them fairly and with dignity. For example, do not:
  - Make offensive or derogatory comments about sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age
  - Use social media to bully or harass another person
5. Comply with copyright, making sure that you acknowledge where permission has been given to reproduce something. For example, do not:
  - Use someone else's images or written content without permission
  - Share publicly a photo that has been shared with you by email or in a closed group
6. Maintain the VPC's political neutrality. For example, you must not:
  - Express a political opinion on behalf of the VPC; you must not post party political opinions from on any media connected to the VPC, and must be clear on personal accounts that any party-political opinions are your own
  - Use your position in the VPC to influence others to vote for or against one or more political parties
7. Keep yourself safe online, especially when sharing personal information or photos of your children. For example, be careful about inadvertently sharing personal details, such as photos that would show someone is in a particular location. If you are a parent as well as a volunteer, remember that when you're sharing photos of your child taken when you are volunteering, you still need to comply with this policy

## What happens if I breach this policy?

If you do not follow this policy, you may be considered to be in breach. This means your Force and/or the VPC will investigate according to the relevant policy and procedures. If, in the reasonable opinion of the leaders (Force), a young person and/or an adult has not met our Expectations it may result in sanctions being applied.

Where in the reasonable opinion of the leaders, a young person and/or an adult has placed material online that is considered illegal or may pose a risk to children or adults, the matter will be reported to the police.

## What should I do if I think someone has breached this policy?

If you are concerned that someone has breached this policy you can report the matter by following the relevant reporting procedure, for example, Safeguarding or Complaints. Always take a screen shot of the relevant posts so that they can be reviewed during the investigation.

## What if the comment or content is made by someone who is not part of the VPC's workforce or beneficiary?

Contributors to social media may include parents, young people and the public. These people are not accountable to this policy. However, they must abide by UK law so, for example, they must not threaten or harass or place a child or young person at risk of harm. Such matters must be reported to the police.

In addition, VPC has a duty of care to its volunteers and cadets. So if in the reasonable opinion of the leaders the content is considered harmful, upsetting or otherwise inappropriate, where possible (e.g. Facebook) it will be removed.

**NOTE: Where you have concerns about the threat of immediate or serious harm to a child or adult you must contact the police and report to the named safeguarding person immediately.**

## What advice and support is available?

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre ([CEOP](#)), - part of the National Crime Agency dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. CEOP provides an [online](#) reporting facility for inappropriate content and images related to children and young people. They also run [Thinkuknow](#) which provides educational resources.

Childnet (<https://www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals>) - aims to make the internet a safer place for children and young people by providing resources, support and education about services available online. The Childnet website has information on the sites and services that children like to use, plus information about mobiles, gaming, downloading and social networking.

[Childline](#) - young people can call Childline's free, confidential helpline 24 hours a day on 08000 1111 to talk about issues from bullying to relationships. Support and advice is also available from the Childline website.

[Kidscape](#) - support for young people to tackle bullying is available on the Kidscape website.