



Social Media Policy

A guide for Scarf Staff/Volunteers/Committee Members/Members on using Social Media to promote the work of Scarf

Policy Created: Dec 2020

Policy Reviewed: March 2026

Date of Next Review: March 2028

Policy will be reviewed bi-annually or sooner as required.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Scarf's work and an area in which we hope to develop over the coming years. It is important for some employees and committee members to participate in social media activities on behalf of Scarf to raise the profile of our work, engage with our audience and participate in relevant conversations.

This policy is intended for all Scarf employees, volunteers and committee members/trustees, and its purpose is to guide them on the use of social media whilst safeguarding the privacy of our members and protecting the reputation of Scarf. It must be read before they engage in work-related social media activity and applies to content posted on both a Scarf device and a personal device.

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of Scarf's work, and the use of social media by employees/volunteers and committee members in both a professional and personal capacity.

Currently Scarf has both a **Scarf Facebook page**, which can be seen publicly, a **closed Scarf Facebook group** and a closed **Scarf Members WhatsApp Group**, which are for Scarf members and key employees only (administered by our Programme Coordinator who gives permission for Facebook users to join this closed group). We also have an active website and in future plan to develop interactive areas of our website, e.g. a parents' forum and a young people's forum.

Scarf uses our **public Facebook page** to share news with our members and supporters, publicise our work and any fundraising we are involved with, encourage people to become involved with our work and to share relevant news and events from other organisations.

Scarf's **closed Facebook group** and **closed WhatsApp Group** are for members and key employees only to share information, and are also used to publicise Scarf events and news and post relevant information from other local groups. In addition to this they offer a safe space for parents/carers to post pictures and comments on Scarf activities they took part in, and ask questions/seek advice and information from other Scarf members, in the knowledge that their posts/comments are only seen by other Scarf members.

Currently Scarf's Programme Coordinator and Vice Chair are responsible for the day-to-day management of our social media channels, including posting relevant material and monitoring comments.

Please see Appendix I for Guidance for Members on use of Scarf Online Member Groups (Facebook and WhatsApp).

GUIDELINES

Social Networking on Behalf of Scarf — Appropriate Conduct

Scarf employees/volunteers and committee members should be an ambassador for our brand at all times, they should be very careful about what they post on social media ensuring they reflect Scarf's values and use our tone of voice, and must avoid anything which may have the potential to negatively impact on Scarf. Employees/committee members must have regard for the fact that social media can attract attention, so posts must remain professional at all times.

All employees/volunteers and committee members should follow these guidelines when posting in Scarf's social media outlets:

- Ensure that all social media content that is posted has a purpose and a benefit for Scarf or our members and audience.
- Take care with the presentation of content. Ensure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
- Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate, engaging with the audience.
- Employees/committee members shouldn't post content about Scarf members/service users without their express permission, and if using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media (please see Scarf's Photography and Filming Policy for further guidelines: <https://scarfnewforest.org/policies-and-forms>).

- If employees/committee members are sharing information from supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audience knows it has not come directly from Scarf.
- Employees/committee members should refrain from offering personal opinions via Scarf's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 're-posting'. If you are in doubt about Scarf's position on a particular issue, please speak to Scarf's Chair.
- Employees/committee members should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Instagram, Twitter/X accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Scarf. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the committee can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.
- Scarf is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. As an organisation we have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.
- If a complaint is made on Scarf's social media channels, employees/committee members should seek advice from Scarf's Chair before responding. If the Chair is not available, then employees should speak to the Vice Chair.
- Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity. If any employees/committee members become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Scarf's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to Scarf's Chair/Vice Chair immediately.
- Employees/committee members who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at Scarf should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with Scarf's Chair/Vice Chair.
- Scarf employees/volunteers are prohibited from taking photographs, videos or voice recordings of other employees or Scarf members unless asked to on behalf of Scarf. Where an employee is permitted to take photographs, videos or voice recordings for Scarf purposes, ideally these should be taken on a Scarf device (phone or camera) and those photographs, videos and voice recordings must not be shared on social media without the consent of those involved. If it is necessary for a Scarf employee or committee member to use their own phone for taking photos for Scarf purposes, once the images have been shared with the Programme Coordinator, then they should be deleted (unless they are of their own family member).
- Employees/volunteers/committee members must not upload or share information which would put either themselves, Scarf members/families or other employees at risk.

- Employees/Committee Members should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Scarf 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
- Scarf employees/volunteers and committee members should remain mindful that 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 or vulnerable young adults associated with Scarf via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with Scarf follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Scarf should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Scarf content and other content is appropriate for them.

Social Networking using Personal Social Media Channels — Appropriate Conduct

- When using their personal social media accounts, employees/committee members should use common sense and good judgement, being aware of their association with Scarf and ensure their profile and related content is consistent with how they wish to present themselves to the general public and the Scarf community. If they can be identified as a Scarf employee in any postings or profile, then they must ensure their behaviour does not bring Scarf into disrepute or impact negatively on Scarf in any way.
- Scarf 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 Scarf, employees/committee members are expected to hold our position of neutrality. Employees/committee members who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from Scarf, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
- Employees/committee members should never use our logos unless approved to do so by the Committee.
- Employees/committee members should be encouraged to be careful with their privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. They should be encouraged to consider content carefully, as what is published is widely accessible and will be around for a long time.
- We encourage employees/committee members to share posts that we have issued, eg. a fundraising event we would like to publicise widely. When online in a personal capacity, they might also see opportunities to comment on or support Scarf 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 Committee who will respond as appropriate.

- Where employees/committee members have any comments, questions or observations, both positive and negative, about the work or Scarf, they must raise these through the appropriate channels rather than using social media outlets.
- If employees/committee members are concerned about a colleague/fellow committee members online behaviour, such concerns should be raised with Scarf's Chair.

Social Media Contact between Employees/Volunteers/Committee Members and Scarf Members – Appropriate Conduct

- Scarf employees/volunteers are discouraged from engaging in social networking with Scarf members, including parents/carers, children/young people. However, there may be cases where genuine friendships are developed or existed before a person became an employee of Scarf, e.g. between employees and young people who are of a similar age, or where Scarf members have become family friends. In this case Scarf accepts that on-line friendships will be an important aspect of that relationship, but remind employees to ensure they maintain a separation between their work life and personal life.
- Committee members are likely to have or develop friendships and support networks with other Scarf families and want to extend this to becoming “friends” on social media, which is a natural extension of their friendship. However, committee members should be mindful of their commitment to Scarf and take care to separate their committee responsibilities from their personal life.

Appendix I

Guidance for Use of Scarf Online Member Groups (Facebook and WhatsApp)

Scarf provides a closed Facebook group and WhatsApp group chat for members as part of their membership. These groups are optional and intended to support Scarf and its members by providing a space to share relevant information, seek advice, and offer mutual support.

Membership of the Groups

- Access to these groups is restricted to current Scarf members only
- Non-members will be asked to leave or may be removed from the groups
- Members who leave Scarf are expected to leave the groups

Purpose of the Groups

The groups should be used to:

- Share Scarf-related information, updates and reminders
- Share photos and experiences of Scarf activities
- Seek or offer advice and support connected to Scarf, parenting, or shared experiences
- Build a respectful, inclusive, and supportive community in line with Scarf's values

Expectations of Conduct

Members using Scarf online groups should:

- Communicate respectfully and thoughtfully at all times
- Be mindful that these are moderated spaces linked to Scarf
- Ensure posts and comments align with Scarf's ethos and Good Practice Guidelines

What Is Not Appropriate

The groups should not be used to:

- Share fundraising appeals for other charities or causes without prior agreement from the Scarf Committee
- Post content that may cause offence, discomfort, or division within the group

Moderation

- The groups are moderated by Scarf representatives
- From time to time, posts or comments may be removed where they do not align with these guidelines
- Where issues arise, the Committee will aim to address them sensitively and proportionately, with the intention of maintaining a positive and supportive group environment.