

Social Media Usage Policy – Dos and Don'ts

Our Social Media Usage Policy has been written to ensure everyone has clear guidance on how to use their personal social media channels while working or volunteering at Fire Fighters Charity.

Our goal is for everyone to feel empowered to talk about the charity in a way that's positive, professional, and aligned with the great work we do!

To complement the policy, we've pulled together this handy list of dos and don'ts to help you decide if and how you'd like to support the charity online.

If you're uncertain about anything, or you'd simply like to chat something through, please reach out to the Engagement team, who will be happy to give you a steer.

'Dos'

1. **Do follow our social media accounts, liking and reposting as appropriate:** Every like, share or retweet helps to raise awareness and extend our reach.
2. **Do be positive, upbeat, respectful, and inclusive in tone:** If you are commenting on one of our posts, or quote-sharing, please do so in a positive and supportive way. Being polite, considerate, and diplomatic are good rules of thumb!
3. **Do stick to facts, not conjecture and know the context of what you're talking about:** If you're talking about the charity, stick to things that are already in the public domain. Do avoid getting drawn into tricky discussions or topics on sensitive issues.
4. **Do respect all our potential audiences:** public posts on social media can end up going far and wide. Please also be mindful of trigger warnings around sensitive topics.
5. **Do talk in the first person (not representing your words as being of or on behalf of the charity):** You're posting from your accounts, so speak as yourself, offering your own (positive) views. Do avoid committing to anything without proper authorisation.
6. **Do encourage others to follow us on our branded social accounts:** People on one channel might not be aware that we're on others, so always useful to reiterate that we're on multiple social channels.
7. **Use hashtags intentionally and helpfully:** Hashtags can help to raise awareness, so use them when you're quote-sharing our posts, the Engagement team can advise you if you're unsure which to use. Popular hashtags include #FireFamily and #BlueLight
8. **Do use good quality images and video:** if you're posting about our work, use high resolution images to help showcase us in the best light.
9. **Do refer to our key policies and guidelines,** available soon on the Document Hub.
10. **Do reach out to the Engagement team** if you have any questions or need any support.

Don'ts – a few things to be aware of...

1. **Don't misrepresent the charity:** Hopefully this one goes without saying, but don't create or operate unofficial charity accounts or use our logo, trademarks, or materials without approval.
2. **Don't post opinions that could be mistaken as the charity's stance:** As in the dos above, stick to known facts regarding the charity and avoid personally posting or commenting on contentious fire-related issues.
3. **Don't approach big names or organisations for support through your personal accounts:** If you have an idea about who we could approach, talk to the Engagement or Fundraising teams, who can follow up.
4. **Don't feed the trolls:** if you see anyone trolling or posting negative things about us or the fire and rescue community, don't engage. If you see something that represents a risk, let the engagement team know.
5. **Don't forget to keep personal and charity social media separate:** Avoid accepting friend requests on your personal accounts from service users, unless they're also colleagues or you have a pre-existing relationship. LinkedIn is a professional social network so this can be used to build professional connections as appropriate.
6. **Don't share any confidential information:** please ensure you don't share anything that could jeopardise patient confidentiality, the privacy of guests or service users, or anything that could be commercially sensitive.

If you need any additional support or guidance, don't hesitate to reach out to Tim Beynon in the Engagement team at tbeynon@firefighterscharity.org.uk