



**SCOUTS**<sup>®</sup>  
South Africa

# Social Media Policy

Version 2022/v1

Revision Date: 22 February 2022

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## **Preamble**

Social Media plays a vital role in how we interact with people in and out of SCOUTS South Africa (SSA). Everybody that has access to social media will be able to see and read what gets posted on these platforms. These communication vehicles enable current and past Scouts and Scouters, as well those who are interested in participating or are just interested in Scouting in general, to communicate directly with each other about Scouting. It forms an integral part of how SSA will be and is perceived by SSA members, the general public, potential parents, and donors. Although using social media is not a Scouting activity, the usage thereof to connect with others interested in Scouting can be a positive experience. But the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility. This policy sets out the guidelines that should be followed to ensure social media is used positively and responsibly. This is everybody's responsibility, regardless of age, role, or position.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to anyone who accesses, posts or comments on any social media platform to use the medium positively and responsibly, including those:

- using an official account that represents SSA, its branches or units.
- using a personal account in a way that represents SSA.
- using a personal account as an adult member of SSA.
- using a personal account as a youth member of SSA.

## **Scope of the Policy**

The Social Media Policy applies to all youth and adult members involved in the various branches and units of SSA.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with SSA's Organisational Rules (OR), the Child Protection Policy, the Marketing and Branding Policy, and the POPIA and Retention of Documents Policy.

Practice Notes may be issued from time to time, to give effect to the Policy's aim and purpose. These are operational in nature and may change as required. Any changes will be communicated through the structures of SSA, and the most up to date version will always be available on the national website.

## **Definitions**

Social media is defined as any online publication and commentary outside of website and e-newsletters. This includes blogs, wikis, and social networking sites and apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.

All other terms used are defined as per OR.

## **Policy Approval**

This new Policy was approved for publication at the SCOUTS South Africa Management Committee meeting on 22 February 2022 by the committee comprising of:

Mr K Mdaka (Chief Scout), Mr C Belling, Ms J Hutchinson, Ms N Majola, Mr G Pienaar, Mr C Rens, Mr T Rijs, Ms M Siebrits, Mr L Stanton, Mr P Statham, Mr J Sturgeon and Mr K Trollip.

## 1. Introduction

Social media channels can be useful in building a good dialogue between people interested in Scouting and can be a highly visual way of sharing photos and videos, as well as offering real time updates on what Scouting is up to. Social media is a valuable tool that can be used by SSA to promote and grow the organisation. However social media comes with risks, and the guidelines in this policy are set out to mitigate these risks.

Social Media platforms include, but are not limited to:

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Twitter
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Reddit
- WhatsApp, Telegram, and other messenger platforms
- Any other digital platform where a user can post information, videos and/or graphics that would be visible publicly or to a group of followers or subscribers.

## 2. Principles

SSA encourages the sharing and reposting of online information regarding SSA that is relevant, appropriate to the aims and method of Scouting, and is of interest to its members and stakeholders. SSA does not encourage the sharing or reposting of online information regarding SSA that is irrelevant or that does not involve factual Scout related activities.

### 2.1. Promotion of positive images of Scouts

The use of social media in the context of Scouting should be used to reinforce positive messaging and promote the image of Scouting.

SSA encourages the sharing of information showing Scouting in action. As far as possible, images and videos should show members wearing scarves while experiencing the adventure and positive experiences of Scouting.

### 2.2. Protecting the image of SSA

SSA and members' social media represents the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional tone. Social media posts should be in keeping with the aims and values of SSA, and posts made through social media channels should not damage the organisation's reputation in any way.

- Information posted on social media should be assumed to be permanent.
- Members will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory, or misleading information about SSA, or the work of other organisations or individuals.

- Members should avoid live streaming or posting video recordings unless all participants being filmed are aware, have consented and have been briefed on how best to represent SSA. Live streaming is risky as the actions and words of those being filmed are immediately made public. Youth members should not be permitted to live stream.
- When sending emails, the "Scouts.org.za email & email signature guidelines" should be followed.

Members will be representing the image of SSA when:

- Wearing Scout uniform, scout scarf, or clothing that can be identified as being related to Scouting.
- Having signs or branding visible that is related to Scouting.
- They are an adult with a formal role in within SSA.
- They verbally – or otherwise - identify themselves as a SSA member.

### **3. Use of social networking sites by SSA, regions, branches, and units**

Where a social media channel (e.g., Instagram account or Facebook group) is being set up in the name of SSA, a national event, a region or regional event, branch or unit, the following principles should apply:

- The social media profile must be password protected with a strong password (where the platform allows) and the password or admin right should be held by at least three adult members. Administrators should also ensure that their profiles are protected by strong passwords.
- The site should be monitored and moderated.
- All those who use the site should be made aware what the purpose of the site is and that any inappropriate images, content that is not in line with the Scout Promise and Law is not acceptable.
- Any inappropriate posts should be removed by the admins of the site, as per the moderation guideline in this policy. Reasons should be explained to the person who posted the content.
- Only set up a social media channel for events, activities, or groups for which you are responsible.
- No social media channels should be opened without the permission of the person holding responsibility. E.g., the CEO for channels representing SSA, the Regional Commissioner for channels representing regions, and the SGL for channels representing a group.

### **4. Safeguarding youth**

Safeguarding the welfare of children and young people is an integral part of SSA, and this policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy.

#### **4.1. General principles**

The following general principals apply to social media:

- No personal details or information relating to the youth member should be posted when posting images or photos online. Never provide personal details about members and avoid tagging or mentioning the names of youth members in photos.
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through a social networking site must be dealt with in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.
- Photos, audio visual recordings, video, sound bites, etc. may only be published where consent has been obtained by parents or guardians, and only for the purpose given in the consent. This consent is usually found in the "Application for Youth Membership" and "Parent Consent Indemnity" forms.
- Adult members should avoid friending or following a youth member using a personal account. It puts the youth member in an awkward place if they receive a request from someone in a position of power when they would prefer to keep their online life private. Similarly, adult members should avoid accepting friend requests on their personal social media accounts from youth members.
- If adult members have personal social media accounts where access cannot be restricted (i.e., a public platform), the members should be seen to be always representing SSA and should not post anything that can be perceived by a youth member as being against the aims and values of Scouting.

#### **4.2. Using social network sites for communication with youth**

Adult members should not use the "chat feature" or go into private discussion chat rooms with youth members. Communications with youth members should be via open group chat.

Parents or guardians should be copied into any communications to their children.

Adult members should not use their personal social networking account to communicate directly, on a one-to-one basis with youth members.

No youth member shall be forced to have a social media account to participate in the Scout Programme or be communicated to.

### **5. Posting and commenting**

When posting or commenting on a social media platform, members must adhere to the following guidelines:

- All posts must respect copyright, fair use, and disclosure laws.
- Members must not publish offensive material that may damage an individual's reputation or cause embarrassment, or content that goes against the Scout Promise and Law.
- Members must be polite, courteous and use appropriate, non-threatening language.
- A reasonable effort should be made to ensure that the post is high quality, for example by checking spelling.

## **5.1. Moderation**

SSA reserves the right to monitor and moderate all social media platforms belonging to regions, branches, units, and Groups.

If a post contains one or more of the following, it should be deleted immediately:

- excessive or inappropriate language
- defamatory, slanderous, or aggressive attacks on SSA or its members, or other organisations or public figures
- breach of data protection privacy laws or use of personally identifiable information (refer to the Protection of Personal Information policy).
- spam, including links to other non-Scouting sites
- advocate illegal activity
- promote personal, political, or religious agendas
- infringe on copyrights or trademarks

Where comments or posts are in line with the aims and values of SSA and do not go against these moderation guidelines, administrators should avoid filtering or removing content that contains opinion or views simply because they disagree with it. Instead allow other members to debate the issue and balance the argument.

## **5.2. Removal of content**

Where comments or posts do not meet the guidelines, the National PR Manager, the Chair: National Marketing Committee, or the CEO will, at their discretion, request that the comment or post be deleted. Where possible, the user will be privately contacted to be explained why their post has been removed in reference to this policy. If needed, the incident and persons involved will be dealt with as per the Member Code of Conduct.

If a member continues to post inappropriate content, SSA reserves the right to ban or block the user to prevent them from posting again and subject the member to disciplinary action. Only the CEO can make the decision to block or ban a SSA member from posting.

## **6. Social Media Guidance for Young People**

Always conduct yourself on the internet as you would face-to-face and be aware of what you say and how you say it. If you wouldn't say or do something in the "real world," then don't do it online.

If you are being bullied or threatened online, immediately discuss this with a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult. Please refer to the Member Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure Policy.

Avoid click-bait, or the use of tags or titles that are sensational or unrelated to your post. Avoid participating in controversial topics where people may attack you or bully you in an unsolicited way based on your opinion.

Avoid any activity that goes against the Scout Promise and Law or the Aims of Scouting, even when you are posting in your personal capacity.

Regularly check your privacy and security settings of social networking sites you belong to and read their privacy policy.

## **7. Amendment Submission Contact Details**

While every attempt is made to ensure that the contents of this Policy are correct and consistent at the time of publication, the changing nature of SSA and the communities that we serve is acknowledged, and as living documents this Policy should and will require correction and amendment from time to time.

Any proposals for amendment of the contents of this Policy should be submitted in line with the process described in the standing Organisation Rules in effect at the time of submission of the proposed amendment.

The proposed amendments for this document should be submitted to:

SCOUTS South Africa  
National Office  
PO Box 2434  
Clareinch 7740  
[info@scouts.org.za](mailto:info@scouts.org.za)