Social Media Policy 2027

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Policy Responsibility: **Sam Gibbs (Principal)**
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PERFORMERS THEATRE COMPANY

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

At Performers Theatre Company, we recognise that social media plays an important role in celebrating achievements, promoting opportunities and communicating with our wider community.

Social media provides valuable opportunities to share the work of our students, staff and performers.

However, its use also presents risks and carries responsibilities, particularly regarding safeguarding, confidentiality and professional conduct.

The use of social media is closely linked to safeguarding. We recognise our responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, including risks associated with inappropriate online communication, the sharing of images and the disclosure of personal information.

All online activity undertaken on behalf of Performers Theatre Company must reflect our commitment to safeguarding and be managed in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

This policy applies to all staff, freelancers, students, parents/carers, volunteers and other individuals associated with Performers Theatre Company.

It covers official company accounts and personal online activity where that activity relates to Performers, its members or its operations.

This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, GDPR and Data Protection Policy, Photographs and Images Policy and relevant Codes of Conduct.

GUIDELINES

Social media includes social networking platforms, messaging applications, online forums, blogs, video-sharing platforms and other forms of digital communication.

The same standards of behaviour expected within Performers Theatre Company apply to online activity. Individuals are responsible for the content they publish and should consider the potential impact of their words, images and actions on others.

All individuals associated with Performers Theatre Company are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully and professionally.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of others.
- Avoid sharing misleading, discriminatory, threatening or harmful content.
- Maintain appropriate safeguarding and professional boundaries.
- Consider the potential consequences of publicly sharing information about Performers, its staff or its members.

Social media activity involving bullying, harassment, threats, safeguarding concerns or breaches of confidentiality may result in appropriate action under the relevant company policies.

Any response will be proportionate to the circumstances and will not prevent individuals from raising legitimate concerns, making complaints or exercising applicable legal rights.

BE RESPECTFUL

Always be fair and courteous towards fellow colleagues, parents/carers, students, external organisations and individuals working on behalf of Performers Theatre Company.

We encourage concerns or complaints to be raised directly with the Principal, Business Manager or, where relevant, Friends of Performers Theatre Company (FoPT), so that matters can be addressed constructively.

However, individuals retain the right to express reasonable opinions, raise legitimate complaints and report concerns through appropriate channels.

Social media must not be used to:

- Bully, harass, intimidate or threaten others.
- Publish discriminatory or deliberately malicious content.
- Share private information about students, families or staff without authorisation.
- Encourage hostility towards individuals associated with Performers.
- Make knowingly false allegations intended to cause harm.

All online behaviour should reflect the values of Performers Theatre Company, including respect, professionalism and inclusivity.

BE HONEST AND ACCURATE

Individuals should take reasonable care to ensure that information shared online is accurate and not misleading.

Where an error is identified, it should be corrected promptly and appropriately.

Individuals must not knowingly publish false information or rumours about Performers Theatre Company, its staff, students, parents/carers, external organisations or other individuals.

Remember that information published online may be copied, shared or retained by others, even after the original content has been deleted.

POST ONLY APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL CONTENT

All individuals must respect the confidentiality of Performers Theatre Company and those associated with it. Confidential information must not be shared publicly without appropriate authorisation.

This includes:

- Personal information about children, families or staff.
- Medical, safeguarding or welfare information.
- Confidential internal communications.
- Private financial, contractual or business information.
- Non-public photographs, videos or rehearsal materials.
- Information obtained through access to company systems or records.

Staff and freelancers must not present personal opinions as official statements on behalf of Performers Theatre Company.

Where individuals discuss their association with Performers online, they should make clear when they are expressing personal views rather than speaking on behalf of the organisation.

Personal data must be handled in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

The publication and sharing of photographs or recordings must comply with the Photographs and Images Policy.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Staff, freelancers and volunteers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children and young people at all times, including online.

This includes:

- Not initiating or engaging in private social media conversations with students under 18 through personal accounts.
- Not accepting or initiating personal friend or follow connections with current students under 18.

- Not using personal messaging accounts to arrange rehearsals, discuss student matters or communicate privately with children.
- Using approved company communication channels for all production, class and organisational matters.
- Not sharing personal contact details with children for purposes unrelated to authorised company activities.
- Reporting inappropriate contact or online behaviour promptly.

Where a student initiates contact through a personal account, staff should not continue a private conversation. Any necessary response should direct the student towards an appropriate official communication channel.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

These expectations apply equally to productions involving both adult and child performers.

Staff and freelancers must also refer to the Staff Code of Conduct.

OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The Principal has sole responsibility for the management, administration and publication of content on Performers Theatre Company's official social media accounts.

Staff, freelancers, volunteers and other representatives must not independently publish content on behalf of Performers Theatre Company without the Principal's prior authorisation.

Staff may submit photographs, videos, student achievements, production updates and suggested content to the Principal for consideration.

Before publishing identifiable images or recordings of children, the Principal must ensure that the relevant photography or filming permissions have been checked.

General photography permissions recorded through ClassManager and separate production filming permissions must be considered according to the intended use of the material.

Content published through official accounts must:
- Reflect the values and professional standards of Performers Theatre Company.
- Comply with safeguarding and data protection requirements.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of children and young people.
- Avoid disclosing confidential or unnecessary personal information.
- Comply with applicable copyright and production licensing restrictions.

The Principal is responsible for monitoring official accounts and responding appropriately to concerns raised through them.

ACCOUNT SECURITY

Official social media accounts must be managed securely to protect the organisation and its members.

The following arrangements apply:
- Account access must be restricted to the Principal.
- Strong, unique passwords must be used.
- Multi-factor authentication must be enabled wherever available.
- Passwords and access credentials must not be shared with unauthorised individuals.
- Devices used to access official accounts must be appropriately secured.
- Suspicious messages, links or requests for account information must be treated with caution.
- Any suspected unauthorised access or account compromise must be reported and addressed promptly.

Where an incident may involve personal information, the GDPR and Data Protection Policy and its data breach procedures must be followed.

PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEOS AND STUDENT PRIVACY

Photographs and videos are an important part of celebrating the achievements of our performers. However, their publication must always prioritise safeguarding and privacy.

Performers Theatre Company will:

- Check relevant permissions before publishing identifiable images of children.
- Respect photography and filming restrictions recorded for individual students.
- Avoid publishing children's full names alongside identifiable images.
- Avoid sharing information that could unnecessarily identify a child's location, personal circumstances or safeguarding needs.
- Consider requests to remove published material and respond appropriately.
- Ensure that production-related photographs and recordings comply with relevant permissions and licensing requirements.

Staff and freelancers must not independently publish photographs or recordings of students on personal accounts without appropriate authorisation.

Parents/carers and audience members must also respect the photography and sharing restrictions communicated for individual events and performances.

REPORTING CONCERNS

Any concerns about inappropriate social media activity involving Performers Theatre Company should be reported promptly.

Concerns may include:

- Inappropriate online communication with children.
- Bullying, harassment or threatening behaviour.
- Unauthorised publication of photographs or personal information.
- Impersonation or misuse of company accounts.
- Suspected account compromise or data breaches.
- Online activity that may place a child or young person at risk.

Safeguarding concerns must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) where appropriate, in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Other concerns should be reported to the Principal.

Where a concern involves the Principal, it should be referred through the alternative safeguarding or reporting arrangements set out in the relevant company policy.

Any suspected personal data breach must be handled in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

Individuals must not independently investigate safeguarding concerns or delay reporting while attempting to resolve matters themselves.

RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED

Performers Theatre Company does not tolerate retaliation against individuals who raise genuine concerns, report suspected misconduct or cooperate with an appropriate investigation.

Concerns raised in good faith will be treated seriously and handled fairly.

Any retaliatory behaviour may result in appropriate action in accordance with the relevant company policies.

Nothing in this policy prevents individuals from making protected disclosures, reporting concerns to appropriate authorities or exercising their legal rights.

MEDIA CONTACTS

No staff member, freelancer, volunteer or other representative may speak to the media on behalf of Performers Theatre Company without prior approval from the Principal.

All official media enquiries should be referred to the Principal.

This does not restrict an individual's legal right to raise concerns or make protected disclosures through appropriate channels.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Principal is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and managing the organisation's official social media presence.

Any suspected breach of this policy will be considered fairly and proportionately, taking account of the circumstances and relevant company procedures.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to safeguarding guidance, data protection requirements, technology or organisational practices make this necessary.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy.
- Photographs and Images Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Student Code of Conduct.
- Parent/Carer Code of Conduct.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Production and Rehearsal Policy.