Social Media Policy

The Duke of Edinburgh's InternationalAward Malta Foundation

April 2024

Version Control

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Approved on	*Approved by*	*Next Revision*
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Relevant Policies and documentation

- None

1. Introduction

This social media policy outlines the guidelines for the responsible use of social media by all associated with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Malta Foundation ("The Award"). The policy aims to ensure that social media interactions enhance the Award's reputation and brand identity, comply with legal standards, and foster a positive online community.

Social networking sites have increasingly become popular as means of contacting people, discussing issues or advertising upcoming events. These sites offer a world of possibilities for all, including participants of The Award. Whilst many of our members are avid users of sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, it is crucial for adults involved with the Award to ensure both their safety and that of young people online. The Award has developed guidelines to assist you in using social media channels effectively and safely.

As an Award Leader, you play a key role in actively promoting these safety messages. Although not directly related to the activities of the Award, these sites can be useful for specific projects, helping to connect with others interested in the Award and can provide very positive experiences. However, anyone with an internet connection can create and participate in online communities where people discuss various topics, share stories, photos, videos, and other types of media. For this reason, the creation and maintenance of these channels require careful planning, responsibility, and an awareness of the context in which these sites are used while ensuring that no personal information about our members is publicly visible.

As with any activity associated with the Award, safety and the protection of young people should be a primary focus. Award Leaders need to be particularly cautious about whom they accept as 'friends' on sites such as Facebook since these platforms are designed for peer-to-peer contact—content of messages and photographs must be appropriate for the young members and their parents.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, participants, and any other stakeholders engaging with social media in relation to The Award.

3. Definition of Social Media

"Social Media" refers to all forms of online platforms used for publishing, discussion, or networking. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)
- Blogs and forums
- Chat rooms and messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp)
- Video and photo-sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, Instagram)
- Wikis and online collaborations (e.g., Google Docs, Slack)

4. Official Social Media Platforms

The Award Malta maintains several official social media accounts to share information, promote activities, and engage with the community:

- Official website: www.intaward.mt
- Facebook: @dofemalta
- Instagram: @dofemlta
- LinkedIn: The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Malta

5. Using Personal Social Media

While staff and volunteers may access personal social media during work or field activities, they must:

- Prioritise productivity and participant engagement.
- Maintain confidentiality and adhere to all Award policies.
- Clearly distinguish personal opinions from Award positions.
- Avoid sharing sensitive or proprietary information without proper authorisation.
- Refrain from posting defamatory, offensive, or derogatory content.

6. Responsibilities when representing The Award

Individuals directly managing or contributing to official Award social media accounts must:

- Conduct themselves professionally and responsibly.
- Be accurate and careful with the information shared.
- Engage politely and constructively with users and stakeholders.
- Avoid discussing topics outside their expertise or authority.
- Adhere to data protection and privacy policies.
- Be proactive in addressing any negative comments or misinformation.
- Use official hashtags such as **#DofEMalta** and **#WorldReady** to promote consistency and visibility.

7. Content Management

- Content creation should align with The Award's communication strategy and branding guidelines.
- Regular updates should be planned to maintain an active and engaging online presence.

8. Monitoring and Responding

- Monitor social media for mentions of The Award and its activities.
- Responses to both positive and negative feedback should be timely, respectful, and in line with this policy.
- Significant issues encountered online should be escalated to the social media team or appropriate department for proper handling.

9. Internet Safety Guidelines

These guidelines aim to ensure that all online interactions remain safe and are conducted in a spirit that reflects the values and objectives of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award:

- Keep online interactions public, such as on discussion boards rather than private emails.
- Do not share personal details unless it's with parental consent and under appropriate circumstances.
- Maintain privacy of your login information; only share passwords with trusted family adults.
- Be cautious with online interactions; if a conversation or contact feels uncomfortable, trust your instincts and consult a trusted adult.

By adhering to these guidelines, you can ensure that your engagement with social media is both productive and safe, reflecting the values of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Malta.

10 The Common Sense Approach

While social network profiles are easy to establish and use, maintaining a professional distance online, just as you would offline, is important. Remember:

- You are in a position of trust.
- Once posted online, content becomes public – accessible, alterable, and shareable by others.
- All communication on social media channels must remain public to allow monitoring and ensure there is no inappropriate communication between adults and young participants. Consequently, private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invite-only YouTube channels) are unacceptable for managing Award-related activities. Private channels and communications can put both the youth and the leader at risk.
- The Buddy System is applicable in social media by ensuring that all communications between adults and youth occur in a public forum (e.g., the Facebook wall), and any electronic communication includes one or more authorised adults openly copied in the message thread.
- Conduct yourself online as you would face-to-face—be mindful of what you say and how you say it.
- Avoid engaging in private conversations with young people via chat facilities or instant messaging, akin to being alone in a room and closing the door.
- Always ensure you have parental permission to use any photos of young people and use only their first names in any captions.
- Use only appropriate images on your sites, ones you would be happy to display on a public notice board.
- If concerned about how a young person is trying to contact you, report it immediately to Coordinator or relevant authority within the Award.
- When emailing or texting young people, always include another adult in your communications and use the 'bcc' option when emailing multiple recipients to protect privacy.
- Keep your private life separate from the Award activities.
- Personal social media profiles should keep personal information private (e.g., do not display your phone number, address, or personal email).
- Be familiar with and adhere to the terms of service of the platforms you use.

11. General Considerations for Social Media Use

The Award expects all adults using social media for Award-related purposes to:

- Monitor social media diligently. Assign a qualified staff member or volunteer to oversee this daily, with backup administrators to ensure no gaps in monitoring.
- Integrate your communications across various media to disseminate key messages effectively.
- Engage with your audience and encourage open dialogue about the Award.
- Develop resilience against negativity; not all negative comments require a response, but those that do should be handled judiciously and thoughtfully.
- Direct media inquiries to the designated person for an official response.
- Maintain decorum even when disagreements arise online, avoiding overly defensive or abrupt withdrawal from discussions.
- Build trust through openness and transparency about the challenges and opportunities within the Award community.

12. Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually to adapt to new social media developments and changes in legal or regulatory standards. Feedback from users and internal stakeholders will be considered during reviews to enhance the policy's effectiveness.

Empower Future Generations to Excel

Your centre is more than a place of learning—it's where young people ignite their passion for adventure and acquire a thirst for knowledge. As a Duke of Edinburgh's Award centre, you uphold the highest standards of safety and incident reporting. This steadfast commitment ensures that young adventurers can explore and grow with peace of mind, secure in the knowledge that their well-being is prioritised, paving the way for their lifelong success

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD
MALTA

Empower excellence

If you have any questions regarding our policies or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on compliance@intaward.mt.

Comprehensive details of our policies can be readily accessed on our website.

intaward.mt
admin@intaward.mt | +356 7980 8283

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DOFE/SocialMedia

Design: www.mattborg.eu