**The Spring Charity (Charity no.1121126)**

**Social Media Policy**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a guide for trustees, staff and volunteers using social media to promote the work of The Spring Charity and in a personal capacity.

**What is social media?**

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

**Why do we use social media?**

Social media is essential to the success of communicating The Spring Charity’ s work. It is important for some staff and trustees to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of The Spring Charity 's work.

**Why do we need a social media policy?**

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to The Spring Charity 's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all staff members of all levels, volunteers, and trustees*,* and applies to content posted on both aThe Spring Charity device and a personal device*.* Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff and trustees must read this policy.

**Setting out the social media policy**

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of The Spring Charity and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

**Point of contact for social media**

Our Charity Manager is responsible for the day-to-day publishing and management of our social media channels. The Charity Administrator supports the Charity Manager with monitoring. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, please speak to them.Other than the Charity Manager and Charity Administrator, no other staff member can post content on The Spring Charity’ s official channels without prior permission.

Which social media channels do we use?

The Spring Charity uses the following social media channels:

* Facebook: @Spring Charity Venture
* Instagram: @Spring Charity Venture
* LinkedIn: @The Spring Charity

**Guidelines**

Using The Spring Charity' s social media channels — appropriate conduct:

1. The Charity Manager is responsible for setting up and managing The Spring Charity 's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the Charity Manager will have access to these accounts.

2. The Charity Manager and Charity Administrator check social media once a day during working hours and respond to comments.

3. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff and Trustees should ensure they reflect The Spring Charity’ s values in what they post and use our tone of voice when posting content on The Spring Charity’ s social media channels.

4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for The Spring Charity and accurately reflects The Spring Charity’ s agreed position.

5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them.

6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings, or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.

7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

8. If staff wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the Charity Manager about this.

9. Staff shouldn't post content about families or service users without their express permission. If staff are sharing information about families, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from The Spring Charity. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media. A signed permission form should be kept on record.

10. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

12. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via The Spring Charity 's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about The Spring Charity 's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Charity Manager.

13. It is vital that The Spring Charity does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

14. Staff should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

15. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of The Spring Charity. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Charity Manager can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following and will be responsible for any groups set up for projects etc.

16. The Spring Charity is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

17. If a complaint is made on The Spring Charity 's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the Charity Manager before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the Safeguarding Trustee.

18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis 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.

The Charity Administrator regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of The Spring Charity so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis, the Charity Manager will inform the Safeguarding Trustee and Chair/Deputy Chair Trustee.

If any staff become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on The Spring Charity 's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the Safeguarding Trustee immediately.

**Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct:**

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. The Spring Charity staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with The Spring Charity 's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive The Spring Charity. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of The Spring Charity. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about The Spring Charity 's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent The Spring Charity 's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at The Spring Charity should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Charity Manager. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for The Spring Charity should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Charity Manager.

3. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with The Spring Charity and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, colleagues, partners and funders.

4. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the Charity Manager and Trustees. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.

5.If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the Charity Manager to share the details.

6. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to The Spring Charity, they should talk to the Safeguarding Trustee immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

8. The Spring Charity 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 The Spring Charity, staff are expected to hold The Spring Charity 's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from The Spring Charity and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

9. Never use The Spring Charity’ s logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Chair/Deputy Chair of Trustees.

10. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully.

11. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

12. We encourage staff to share posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support The Spring Charity 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 Charity Manager who will inform the Safeguarding Trustee.

**Policy Review**

This Social Media Policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier in the event of changes in legislation related to social media, or to take into account changes in working practices which may result from any issues occurring.

**Policy adopted. March 2024**

Update: n/a

Date of Next Review: March 2025

Signed on behalf of the Spring Charity: .................................................. Date: ................

**Duncan McApline, Chair of Trustees**