Louth Playgoers Society Limited

Summary

PLEASE USE THIS POLICY IN CONJUCTION WITH THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Title
Social Media Policy

Purpose

Louth Playgoers Society Limited recognises the developing range of technologies used to interactively share, create and discuss issues and content as extremely positive and encourages individuals and volunteers to use social media to promote themselves, the company, the theatre, our achievements and the Arts. However, Louth Playgoers Society Limited reserves the right to challenge anyone using social media either intentionally or by association to insult, slander, create a risk to personal safety or abuse any individual, organisation, theatre or the Arts.

This policy provides guidance for all members to help them understand the acceptable standards of use of social media in Culture. It sets out best practice designed to assist everyone in understanding what the potential risks are in using social media and how these can be managed.   The pace of change in technology means that it is not possible to identify a definitive list of all forms of social media which this policy applies to, hence it is to be read as applying to all forms commonly understood to be social media and used as such. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy (Section 1.4a).

You are reminded that misuse of social media can result in disciplinary action being taken against a member/employee/volunteers of the company.

Policy Governance
The following table identifies who is accountable, responsible, informed or consulted with in regard to this policy.

- Responsible – the person(s) responsible for developing the policy

- Accountable – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy

- Consulted – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation or amendment

- Informed – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation or amendment.

Responsible	Chairman of the Board
Accountable	Theatre Manager
Consulted	Board
Informed	All employees and Volunteers

Definitions

Social media is the collective of online communications and media channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration via a range of technologies such as desktop, laptop, tablets, smartphones and other internet enable devices. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media and examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, Blackberry Messenger, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, Whats App and Reddit.   Young person is used to refer to any person below the age of 18. Disciplinary Action means action taken under the code of conduct rules.

Usage

Whilst members/employees/volunteers are encouraged to use social media to positively promote themselves, the society/theatre, achievements and Culture, the balance between the right to free speech and the responsibility not to insult, slander, and abuse or create risks to anyone's personal safety must be borne in mind. This policy seeks to assist each member in knowing how to achieve that balance.

Good Practice Guidance

The internet presents a unique set of challenges for protecting personal safety as all information posted is available to the whole world, indefinitely. Generational differences in understanding the implications of what is being posted means that there are very different perceptions of risk operating. Whilst young people get great benefits from the online communities they belong to and the instant access they have to friends from across the world, they may need guidance from the people with responsibility for their safety as to what is acceptable and safe use.

The use of social media to target individuals, whether for grooming or the increasing incidences of cyber bullying, has created a set of risks to vulnerable people which is a real challenge to manage. Everyone is creating potential risk to themselves when they post personal information.

For example, if a person posts that they are going on holiday and have their address on their page; it is easy to see that there is an increased risk to their property whilst they are away. If a top artist posts that they are tired, injured, worried about an upcoming event, they are giving their opponents information which provides them with psychological advantages that they would not have otherwise gained.

Thinking before you post will help reduce these sorts of unforeseen consequences.

"Messaging/e-mail

Probably the most commonly used form of social media, messaging is a great way to send fast, cheap communications. This includes Text Messages and instant messaging applications such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and Snapchat. Generally speaking, instant messaging and texts are more personal and private than other forms of social media and for this reason there is more associated potential risk to young people and adults at risk. "

The Theatre will encourage Directors, Presidents and Theatre Management to set up private social media groups and chats for shows so that no one who is not a member of the cast or crew can even see it exists. It is the responsibility of the Group Administrator to monitor the group and report any issues to the relevant Theatre Body (e.g. Safeguarding) and to co-ordinate any complaints as per the Theatre Complaints Procedure. If children of school age are in productions parents or guardians will be added to the group to inform them about the show.

If any volunteers and employees up to the age of 18 are involved in the Theatre or productions, then their parents should still be made aware of the theatre's practice and this policy.

Social networks

Social networks are the communities which develop on media applications, such as Facebook and Twitter. **Please refer to section 1.4a of the theatres Safeguarding Policy for more information.**

It is accepted that some parents/carers are friends with their children, in order to monitor the material posted and seen by them. If the adult then accepts their child's friends, this is not something which Louth Playgoers Society Limited has any jurisdiction over.

Everyone needs to be mindful that:

Expressing your opinion is fine, being rude in the way you express it or expressing discriminatory views is not and could lead to the individual who posted the comment, anyone who forwards or positively affirms the comment, and the person with administration rights for the site used, being subject to disciplinary action. Anyone who has posted an offensive message or image is advised to remove the comment as soon as possible, to reduce its impact.

The speed and variety in the development of social media forums, means that posts can be generated rapidly and spread to a wider audience in a very short space of time. All members, volunteers and employees can and should report any misuse of social media to the theatre management committee so that appropriate action can be taken to maintain the high standards of behaviour expected within the arts.

Twitter

When using Twitter or similar tools, reposting other people's comments or posts can be taken as you are adopting the views they have expressed, and you would be accountable for the content.

Comments made should clearly be attributable to the individual and not to the theatre.

Setting up theatre Webpages

Theatres setting up webpages, including Facebook pages, are advised to ensure that they retain ownership and administration rights over that site. No one individual should have exclusive ownership or administration rights, including the Chairman.

The primary purpose of the site should be for promoting the theatre and the arts and for communicating between members, volunteers and employees of the theatre. Privacy settings should be set so that members of the public cannot contact individuals from the theatre, but must first establish a link with the theatre, via the webpage.

Links from a young person's personal page to the theatre site may be made, but additional links between the pages of an adult and a young person, should not be made. Remember that privacy settings change frequently – keep them under review and update as necessary.
Photos and tagging should be used with consideration for the safety implications which these bring. A photo of the cast, without any tagging of individuals is fine. Do not use tags as this allows people to be identified and then traced. The Theatre recognises people can tag themselves which is beyond their control.

Reporting Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, as is creating and maintaining the high standards of behaviour expected of people in the arts. For these reasons, everyone is encouraged to report concerns of misuse or inappropriate usage of social media to the Board
.
The first point of contact is the Company's Safeguarding Officer and the Company secretary.

Threats of immediate harm or danger should be reported to the police and/or Children's Services or the Local Authority Designated Officer (where the concern relates to someone in a position of trust).

Whilst the law does not move as fast as technology, there is legislation and government guidance which applies to social media usage, including: -

- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Protection from Harassment Act 2003
- Defamation Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- Working Together 2013.
- Prosecutions may be taken for comments/content posted on line.