SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. The purpose of this policy is to:

a) Provide guidelines for staff on using social media on behalf of Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support the delivery of its work.
b) Offer advice for staff and Trustees on using social media in a professional and personal capacity – particularly, where activity may have an impact on the Foundation.

2. Who is this policy for:

a) Staff, Trustees, and partners working closely with the Foundation and who may be viewed as representing its views.

3. Using social media as Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

a) The Foundation has the following accounts: X, LinkedIn, Instagram, Bluesky and Threads.
b) The Communications and Learning Team is responsible for setting up and managing the Foundation's social media accounts, with the Communications Lead as the main point of contact. Other staff with access to these accounts and able to post content include the Director of Communications and Learning, Communication and Learning Assistant, Learning Officer, and Impact Support Manager.
c) The team regularly monitors the Foundation's social media during office hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). We use a Meltwater account to monitor activity outside of these times, with alerts set up for spikes in activity that merit urgent attention.
d) All content (including responses and comments) posted should reflect the Foundation's values and agreed position. If engaging with other users' content, staff should check its accuracy to avoid spreading misinformation or disinformation. See the social media strategy for our regularly updated plan for using social media.
e) Any content (quotes, images, videos) by other organisations that we directly publish should have their consent for us to use. For example: the organisation may have asked us to share their content in our communications, or we may have sought their consent to share their content proactively e.g. as a case study in our communications. See our case study template for example wording for seeking consent.

4. Using personal social media accounts:

We understand that staff use social media in a personal capacity and they are welcome to do so. We have a few guidelines staff should follow in their personal use of social media:

a) Be mindful of who might see what you share, and its potential impact: remember that everything you say on social media is in the public domain, both legally and practically. Anything you say can be forwarded on by others even if you consider it to be private.

b) Even if you make no mention of who you work for on your social media profile, it is likely that people will make the connection.
c) Be yourself: don't be afraid to use your own voice. The best online interactions come from genuineness and include relevant information and personal touches. It's fine to express personal opinions, but…
d) Take care when it's work-related: if you are expressing a view that the Foundation would not endorse, make it clear that this is your personal view, or move the conversation offline.
e) Take care around party politics: Do not associate the Foundation with any political party, their policies or candidates. Make sure it is clear that political views are personal, and check with the Communications Team before engaging in party political activity yourself.
f) In the run-up to an election, take particular care about being clear what is your personal view, and not the view of the Foundation. Even if a policy is not an official party policy, be careful if it has become strongly associated with a particular party.
g) Be respectful: listen and be polite, don't dismiss people whose views do not align with your own.
h) Pause for thought. While it can be tempting to respond quickly – especially to challenges – it is important to recognise when something deserves a little extra thought before replying.
i) Check if you're not sure: if you are in any doubt about your message or your response on any social media platform, speak to the Communications and Learning Team.
j) Activity on social media can sometimes generate press and media attention. Refer anything like this to communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk

5. What happens if this policy is not followed

a) If an employee's activity on social media could harm the reputation and work of the Foundation, this would be brought to the attention of their line manager and the Chief Executive. If the risk to our work were deliberate or serious, this could result in disciplinary action.
b) If a Trustee's activity on social media could harm the reputation and work of the Foundation, this would be brought to the Chair who may choose to raise it with the full Board.
c) If a formal adviser to the Foundation's activity on social media could harm the reputation and work of the Foundation, this would be raised with the staff lead for the relevant contract/project/committee and the Chief Operating Officer.

Approved by Audit and Risk Committee 03/11/26

Further information

- Charity Commission guidance for charities and social media
- Center for Countering Digital Hate has a series of explainers including understanding the difference between misinformation and disinformation, and building information resilience.
- Mind have a guide on looking after your mental health online.
- Stop Hate UK - a free independent 24/7 hate crime reporting helpline who also have a guide on reporting online hate.