



# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for trustee/admins and Northstowe Muslims Community Members on using social media to promote the work of Northstowe Muslims and in a personal capacity.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. Northstowe Muslims will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

<b>Review Dates</b>
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024
5 <sup>th</sup> May 2024

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## Introduction

### **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 Northstowe Muslims's work and for networking but under no circumstance, it can be considered as an official channel for communication. The charity understands that it is important for trustees to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of Northstowe Muslims's work. However, the social media platforms will not be used for answering specific questions regarding meeting minutes, event planning, financial details, etc. The trustees/admins will not be able to answer all questions raised on social media, and therefore, all queries, questions, etc must be sent to [contact@northstowemuslims.org](mailto:contact@northstowemuslims.org)

### **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 Northstowe Muslims'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 carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all trustees/admins and the community members who are either part of Northstowe Muslims WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, Facebook Account, X & Instagram account, and applies to content posted on both a *Northstowe Muslims* device and a personal device.

### **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 Northstowe Muslims, and the use of social media by trustees 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 trustees support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

### **Internet access and monitoring usage**

There is no Internet policy for the sole reason that Northstowe Muslims hold no IT devices in its name. The IT equipments used for social media work are personal devices, therefore will not be monitored for usage, but will still follow the social media policy, if logged in through Northstowe Muslim accounts.

### **Point of contact for social media**

All trustees/admins are responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, please send an email to [contact@northstowemuslims.org](mailto:contact@northstowemuslims.org).

### **Which social media channels do we use?**

Northstowe Muslims uses the following social media channels:

1. WhatsApp: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/Ep7zZE5HkOzKp5lwGcMYSU> and all the associated groups.
2. Twitter (also known as X): <https://twitter.com/NorthstoweM>

3. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Northstowe-Muslims-111484854961736> and all the associated groups/profiles/pages. Etc.
4. Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/northstowe\\_muslims/](https://www.instagram.com/northstowe_muslims/)

## Guidelines

### **Using Northstowe Muslims's social media channels — appropriate conduct**

1. Trustees/admins are responsible for setting up and managing Northstowe Muslims' social media channels. Only trustees/admins will have access to these accounts.
2. The lead time of the response to comments on social media from the trustees will be as per their discretion. There is no maximum/minimum time limit to answer any question/queries raised on social media. The default position is that for any question/query needs to be asked on the only official channel, which is an email to [contact@northstowemuslims.org](mailto:contact@northstowemuslims.org)
3. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Northstowe Muslims, and accurately reflects Northstowe Muslims's agreed position, which are the aims/objectives of Northstowe Muslims. Any comment or post on social media that do not agree with this agreed position, can be deleted.
4. Bring value to our audience(s). Encourage them to ask their questions through the official channel, which is email to [contact@northstowemuslims.org](mailto:contact@northstowemuslims.org)
5. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. If the said comment is against the Northstowe Muslims' agreed position, or affects the positive nature of the Northstowe Muslims community, will be deleted. The decision of the trustees/admins will be final.
6. Trustees shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If trustees are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audience know it has not come directly from Northstowe Muslims. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, trustees must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
7. Always check facts. Trustee/admins & community members 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, to the best of their abilities.
8. 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.
9. It is vital that Northstowe Muslims does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.
10. Trustee/admins & community members 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.

11. Trustee/admins & community members should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Northstowe Muslims. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the trustees/admins can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.
12. Northstowe Muslims 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.
13. Any complaint related to any social media platform, must be diverted/submitted/replied through [contact@northstowemuslims.org](mailto:contact@northstowemuslims.org).
14. 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 trustees/admins reserve the right to delete any post/comment on social media and even temporarily close the social media channels, till the trustees/admins collectively decide to reopen it.
15. Any comment/post on any social media platform, which is considered divisive, provocative, disrespectful, deceitful & harmful, will be deleted.
16. Accounts/users/community members in repeat breach (2<sup>nd</sup> instance) of the social media policy will be suspended from all social media platforms by the trustees/admins. However, they can appeal against their suspension by sending an email to [contact@northstowemuslims.org](mailto:contact@northstowemuslims.org)
17. The trustees/admins/community members have to follow the social media policy.

The trustees/admins will endeavour to regularly monitor our own social media spaces and that of others for mentions of Northstowe Muslims so we can catch any issues or problems early to the best of their abilities. But, for any delay in this regard, would not be held accountable. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis, the trustees/admins will take a collective decision.

### **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. Northstowe Muslims trustees/admins and community members are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with Northstowe Muslims's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Northstowe Muslims. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Northstowe Muslims or any member of the Northstowe Muslims. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about Northstowe Muslims's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Northstowe Muslims's positions, policies or opinions."
2. Trustees who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at Northstowe Muslims should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with managing trustee/chair. Similarly, trustees who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for Northstowe Muslims should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with managing trustee/chair.
3. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Northstowe Muslims 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. Northstowe Muslims works with several high profile people, including [celebrities, journalists, politicians and major donors (delete as appropriate)]. 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 other 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 managing chair to share the details.
6. If a trustee member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to Northstowe Muslims, they should talk to the managing chair immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
7. Northstowe Muslims 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 Northstowe Muslims, trustees/admins and community members are expected to hold Northstowe Muslims' position of neutrality. Trustees who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from Northstowe Muslims and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
8. Never use Northstowe Muslims's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the managing/chair trustee.
9. 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. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely.
10. 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. The trustees/admins reserve the right to delete any comment, which they feel is detrimental to the charity's or trustees/admins' reputation.
11. We encourage trustees and community members to share tweets and posts related to the different activities of Northstowe Muslims. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Northstowe Muslims and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage trustees 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 managing trustee/chair who will respond as appropriate.

## Further guidelines

### **Libel**

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether trustees or community members are posting content on social media, they should not bring Northstowe Muslims into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups or Northstowe Muslims charity.

### **Copyright law**

It is critical that all trustees abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

### **Confidentiality**

Any communications that trustees make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Northstowe Muslims is not ready to disclose yet.

### **Discrimination and harassment**

Trustees and community members should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Northstowe Muslims social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content
- continuously attacking the trustees/admins or posting negative comments on them or their families.

All such comments/posts will be immediately deleted, and the person responsible for commenting and posting, will be removed from all social media platforms, if there is a second instance of breach of social media policy.

### **Use of social media in the recruitment process**

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the [policy name i.e. *Trustee Recruitment Policy*], and associated procedures and guidelines.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision.

### **Protection and intervention**

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a trustee member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should immediately report it to the managing trustee/chair. And, if there is danger of escalation, delete the comments/posts on social media, and inform the managing chair/trustee. The managing chair/trustees will do the same.

### **Under 18s and vulnerable people**

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Considering the above, under 18s and vulnerable people will be informed & encouraged not to become a participant of any of the Northstowe Muslims social media platforms. The trustees/admins will ensure this to the best of their abilities. However, they would need support from the community members to identify any under 18 and vulnerable people.

### **Responsibilities and beach of policy**

Everyone (trustees/admins and all the community members who are associated with any social media account of Northstowe Muslims) is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of Northstowe Muslims is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. The breach of this policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue, which could be removal from all social media accounts of Northstowe Muslims.