

Rhose Community Library

Social Media Policy

Status	Date Approved	Approved by	Name	Signature	
Approved	March 2017	Trustees	Jeffrey James		March 2018

Purpose of policy

This policy is intended to help employees of GVS make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn. Other social media includes but is not exclusive to blogs, video, picture blogging and audio.

This policy outlines the standards GVS requires staff to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which GVS will monitor your use of social media and the action that will be taken in respect of breaches of this policy. The principles of this policy apply to use of social media regardless of the method used to access it - it covers static and mobile IT/computer equipment, as well as work and/or personal smartphones etc.

1. Who is covered by the policy?

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff and volunteers.

2. Why use social media

Social media enables us to connect with the wider community and stakeholders, disseminate information and to seek feedback on key services.

3. Responsibility for implementation of the policy

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

All staff are responsible for their own compliance with this policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. All staff should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to your line manager in the first instance.

Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to your line manager.

4. Using work-related social media

Only those authorised by the Chief Executive Officer are permitted to post material on a social media website in the GVS' name and behalf. Anyone who breaches this restriction will face disciplinary action.

Approved social media websites for GVS include but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Flickr.

Before using work-related social media you must:

- have read and understood this policy and

- have sought and gained prior written approval to do so from the Chief Executive Officer or another officer with delegated responsibility.

5. Personal use of social media

Personal use of social media in the workplace is permitted, subject to certain conditions, as detailed below. It must not be abused or overused and GVS reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time.

The following conditions must be met for personal use to continue:

- use must be minimal and take place substantially outside of normal working hours, for example, breaks, lunchtime
- use must not interfere with business or office commitments
- use must comply with GVS policies.

You are also personally responsible for what you communicate on social media sites **outside the workplace**, for example at home, in your own time, using your own equipment. You must always be mindful of your contributions and what you disclose about GVS. For further details, see Point 7, 'General rules for social media use' below.

6. General rules for social media use

Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules. The same rules would also apply when using social media outside of work:

- Do not post or forward a link to any abusive, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory, defamatory or inappropriate content.
- A member of staff, trustee or volunteer who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted by a colleague onto a social media website should inform the Chief Executive Officer.
- Never disclose sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with your line manager beforehand.
- Do not post material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights.
- Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of GVS.
- You are personally responsible for content you publish – be aware that it will be public for many years.
- When using social media for personal use, use a disclaimer, for example: 'The views expressed are my own and don't reflect the views of my employer'. Be aware though that even if you make it clear that your views on such topics do not represent those of the organisation, your comments could still damage our reputation.

- You should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage GVS even indirectly.
- Do not post anything that your colleagues or our members, stakeholders, partners or suppliers would find offensive, insulting, obscene and/or discriminatory.
- If you have disclosed your affiliation as an employee of GVS you must ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to colleagues, members and stakeholders

7. Monitoring use of social media

Staff should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure

The company reserves the right to restrict or prevent access to certain social media websites if personal use is considered to be excessive. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.

Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and the company.

If you notice any use of social media by other members of staff in breach of this policy please report it to your line manager.

Where it is believed that an employee has failed to comply with this policy, they will face the GVS disciplinary procedure. If the employee is found to have breached the policy, they will face a disciplinary penalty ranging from a verbal warning to dismissal.

The penalty applied will depend on factors such as the seriousness of the breach; the nature of the posting; the impact it has had on the organisation or the individual concerned; whether the comments cause problems given the employee's role; whether the employer can be identified by the postings; other mitigating factors such as the employee's disciplinary record etc. The same test of reasonableness applies when dismissing for improper use of social media as it would for any other misconduct dismissal.