

Social Media Policy

The Social Media Policy defines clear guidelines for Little Hiccups Trustees, staff, and volunteers to support and protect them while interacting with social media followers. This policy is linked to our vision and values; all content should reflect these at all times.

Little Hiccups uses social media to increase membership, share information, communicate with families, fundraise, and increase positive exposure.

Social Media Roles and Responsibilities

- 1) **Account Management:** All access to official Little Hiccups accounts is restricted to Trustees and volunteers, who are responsible for the safekeeping of passwords and account upkeep.
- 2) **Content Standards:** Content must be reflective of our charity's values and avoid contradicting your role within Little Hiccups.

Safeguarding and Privacy

- **Consent:** No photos or videos of children (including TikTok clips) should be posted without prior consent from a parent or carer.
- **Personal Boundaries:** Trustees and volunteers must not link with service users via personal social media profiles or personal WhatsApp accounts.
- **Minor Contact:** If a minor (under 18) from Little Hiccups sends a friend or connection request to a personal profile, it must be respectfully denied and blocked. Trustees must be alerted to the attempt.

Communication Channels & Data Security

- **Direct Outreach (WhatsApp):** WhatsApp is approved for direct parent-to-parent outreach and immediate peer support to ensure accessibility for families. While this facilitates ease of communication, the line between Little Hiccups and personal life must remain clear.
- **Data Protection:** Phone numbers must not be harvested from groups for non-Hiccups use, and sensitive family details must not be stored within the app.
- **Internal Operations (Google Chat):** All work-related messaging, case management, and sensitive internal discussions are mandated to take place on Google Chat. This ensures that charity data is secure, auditable, and kept within the official Little Hiccups professional ecosystem.
- **Official Conduct:** Regardless of the platform used, all communication by Trustees and volunteers is considered official representation of Little Hiccups and must adhere to our professionalism and safeguarding standards.
- **Professionalism:** Internal channels should remain professional; unconstructive criticism of



individuals or the charity is prohibited.

Guidelines for use

Some guidelines on content are below but this list is by no means exhaustive and common sense should be used.

- Sharing external information should be relevant to Little Hiccups and the disabled community. Make sure it is from a reliable and trusted source.
- No personal advertisements for private businesses, etc unless directly relevant to Little Hiccups families (i.e discount for Little Hiccups, providing entertainment at an event, etc)
- Safeguarding is an important issue for Little Hiccups and this should be taken into consideration when posting content. No personal details of any families (especially children) should be posted.
- Little Hiccups has a 'closed' group where photos/videos, etc can be shared from events, etc. It is one of the rules of the group that photos featuring children other than the family's own should not be shared publicly. Breaching this rule could result in a ban from the group at the Trustee's discretion. Photos/videos, etc should only ever be shown on 'open' social media with parent/carer consent beforehand with the exception of sharing an external link (i.e. link to a news article)
- Do not collect sensitive information (such as contact details) via social media as it is not a secure channel
- Do not plagiarize. Ensure that sources are given. Ideally it is best to link to original content.
- Refrain from advocating for political or other polarizing issues online unless it is directly related and beneficial for the disabled community i.e petition for more Changing Places. This extends to joining online groups via Little Hiccups.
- Build trust by being open and transparent. Share information and what the challenges and opportunities are for Little Hiccups and the disabled in our community.

The key to social media success is to stay on top of your sites. Any social media site will require daily monitoring. Encourage discussion by posting quality content and questions. Quickly address any inappropriate messages or misuse. Such inappropriate content includes spam, advertising, offensive statements, inaccurate information, foul language, or unconstructive criticism of Little Hiccups or anyone in the Little Hiccups community.

Little Hiccups has a wide target audience and because of this there is likely to be a range of beliefs and opinions amongst our followers. When disagreeing with other opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on Little Hiccups.



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If users post criticisms, do not outright delete or suppress such postings if they are valid points to consider. Let the comments stand. Correct misinformation, but don't engage in heated arguments. Often, the community will correct itself and step in to correct inaccuracies or defend the institution. If this happens and is sufficient to resolve the issue, there may be no need for an additional official response.

If you feel a post is threatening in nature or otherwise meriting greater concern, consult with Little Hiccups Trustees.

In order to maintain professional boundaries and reduce the risk to Trustees and volunteers of accusations of unprofessional behaviour / breach of safeguarding Little Hiccups recommends that you do not communicate with or request / accept links from service users or their immediate family on any social networking sites or other online forum including Xbox, etc.

Little Hiccups does appreciate that there is an element of a common sense approach however and that the disabled community is a small and close one. Should you befriend a family from Little Hiccups on social media the line between Little Hiccups and personal life must be clear and separate. Some conflicts of loyalty arise from conflicting loyalties which trustees owe or may feel towards family, friends or other people or organisations who are part of the Little Hiccups representative's network. In cases like these, the Trustees and volunteers must declare their conflicts of interest and follow the Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures.

If a minor from Little Hiccups (any under the age of 18) finds a Little Hiccups Trustee or volunteer's personal social networking profile and requests to be linked as a friend, the Little Hiccups representative must respectfully deny the request and block them from further contact. They must alert the Trustees if a minor from Little Hiccups attempts to contact them through the Internet.

Little Hiccups does not intend to interfere with the private life of any Little Hiccups representative, but publicly observable communications, actions or words are not private. All Little Hiccups representatives must use good judgment and discretion. If you want your use of technology to be private, do not allow it to be seen in the electronic public forum. If you or your words are public, make sure they are not contradicting with your role at Little Hiccups and they are reflective of the values of our Charity.

You must not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated by or on behalf of Little Hiccups without express permission to do so from the Trustees.

Enforcement and Review

- **Breach of Policy:** Failure to follow these guidelines may lead to the removal of social media access or further disciplinary action.

Reporting: Any concerns regarding social media content or safeguarding should be reported immediately to



the Chairperson.

Policy agreed by
Trustees on:

Signed by Chairperson:

To be reviewed:



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Amendments

Date	Amendment Made	By whom
4/05/2021	Reviewed - no change. To be reviewed in 2 years.	MWP
04/4/2023	Reviewed - no change. To be reviewed in 2 years.	MWP
16/04/2026	Full policy rewrite to include TikTok, LinkedIn, and BlueSky. Added sections for WhatsApp peer support and Google Chat for internal confidentiality.	MWP



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