Louth Playgoers Society Limited

LOUTH PLAYGOERS | LOUTH RIVERHEAD THEATRE

Summary

Policy Title

Social Media Policy

Purpose

To state clear expectations to safeguard the health and safety of any person visiting or working in the Riverhead Theatre

Scope

This policy applies to all our employees and volunteers regardless of employment agreement or position**. Please use this policy in conjunction with the safeguarding policy**.

Policy Governance

The following identifies who is accountable, responsible, informed or consulted with regard to this policy:

- Responsible – the person(s) responsible for developing this 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	Chairperson of the Board
Accountable	Theatre Manager
Consulted	Board of Directors
Informed	All Employees and Volunteers

Overview

Louth Playgoers Society Limited recognises that developing the 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 then Arts. However, Louth Playgoers Society Limited will 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 to which this policy applies, 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/volunteer of the company.

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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, tablet, smartphone and other internet enabled 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, X(Twitter), Pinterest, Google+, Threads, Instagram, LinkedIn and Reddit. Young person is used to refer to any person below the age of 18 years. 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, the 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

As a general principle, it is recommended that employees/members/volunteers have a profile which is used for their theatre involvement and that they keep their personal identity, pages and profile separate. This will help in distinguishing between what is part of a person's private life and what is part of their life in the theatre. Whilst there will always be grey lines between the two, having separate online identities should assist in focusing the mind on what is and what is not appropriate content and usage, before anything is posted.

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 has been posted means that there are very different perceptions of risk operating. Whilst young people get greater benefits from the online communities that 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 to 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 otherwise have gained.

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

Texting/E-mail

Texting - probably the most commonly used form of social media – is a great way to send fast, cheap communications. Generally speaking, 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.

Over the age of 16, 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, Snapchat, Tlk Tok or X (Twitter). **Please refer to section 1.4a of the theatre's 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 forms 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.

Re-posting

When using any social media platform that allows you to re-post another's post or comment – like X (Twitter), Threads, Tik tok or Instagram – the act of reposting can be taken as you adopting or endorsing the views they have expressed and you would be accountable for the content.

Comments made should be clearly 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, including the Chairperson.

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

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The first point of contact is the Society's Safeguarding Officer 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

It is possible to be prosecuted as a result of comments or contents posted online.