



Social Media Policy

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Introduction

Social media is a term for websites based on user participation and user-generated content. These include social networking sites and other platforms centred on user interaction. Social media can be categorised into six types: blogs, wikis, social networks, forums, podcasts, and content communities.

The same rules that apply to your general actions, as found in the Code of Conduct, also apply to your online conduct.

Paddle Cymru respects the legal rights of employees, and generally, what you do on your own time is your concern. However, actions inside or outside of work that affect your work performance, the work of others, or Paddle Cymru's interests are relevant to our policy.

The lines between public and private, personal, and professional, are blurred in online social networks. This policy covers the responsibilities of employees both inside and outside of work.

Using Social Media Outside Work

The personal image you project on social media may negatively impact the organisation's image:

- Present yourself in the best light. By identifying yourself as a Paddle Cymru employee within a social network, you are connected to your colleagues, members, and partners. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at Paddle Cymru.
- Think twice before posting. You should use mature discretion in all personal communications in social media. If you would not write something in an email, on Paddle Cymru headed paper, or say it aloud in a pub then you should not put it on a social networking site. They are very public forums and should be treated as such. This includes retweeting or sharing posts made by others.

- Include a disclaimer. When using social media for personal purposes, you must not imply you are speaking for Paddle Cymru. Do not use a Paddle Cymru e-mail address, logo, or other identification. Make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only.
- Where possible, you should include a standard disclaimer, such as: "Statements and opinions here are my own and are not that of my employer. "
- Understand your obligations. You must comply with other organisational policies when using social media. For example, you should be careful not to breach confidentiality and data protection policies.
- Show respect to all. You should be respectful of the organisation and your fellow employees.

Using Social Media for Communication at Work

Paddle Cymru encourages open and two-way conversation with target audiences.

Paddle Cymru expects you to exercise personal responsibility when participating in social media. This includes not breaching the trust of those with whom you are engaging. You should be sure that you are presenting accurate information and ensuring audiences are not misled.

Social media enables people to express opinions and share information as part of a distributed conversation. Each tool and medium has proper and inappropriate uses.

Whilst Paddle Cymru encourages all its employees to join in conversations, it is important to understand what is recommended, expected, and required when you discuss Paddle Cymru related topics.

When used with due care, social media can be of real benefit to Paddle Cymru. For example, a LinkedIn profile highlights the expertise of our people. Twitter and Facebook can help generate enthusiasm for and awareness of our work.

If you are keen, Paddle Cymru encourages you to share Facebook posts, retweet, and positively post items about your work. This helps to build the profile of sport in Wales.

Guidance to Employees

You should:

- Not set up any social media platforms or feeds as a Paddle Cymru account.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct.
- If you are uncertain about publishing something online, this document may help. If you still do not know if something you want to publish is appropriate, it is best to hold back and seek the advice of your line manager.

- Declare yourself. Some bloggers work anonymously, using pseudonyms. Paddle Cymru discourages this in blogs, wikis or other forms of online participation that relate to the organisation. We believe in transparency and honesty. If you are blogging about your work for Paddle Cymru, we encourage you to use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify where you work. If you have a personal stake in something you are talking about, ensure you have made this clear. What you publish will be around for a long time so consider the content carefully and be sensible about disclosing personal details.
- Write in your own voice; do not be afraid to show your personality and speak from your own perspective. If the nature of the content is contentious, please speak to your line manager before you contribute.
- Adhere to copyright and data protection laws. For the organisation's protection as well as your own, it is critical that you stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply. Ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are private or internal to the organisation. Be aware that content on social media websites may be subject to Freedom of Information requests.
- Ensure your contributions add value. Paddle Cymru's reputation is, in a large part, affected by the behaviour of its staff and everything you publish reflects on how we are perceived. Social media should be used in a way that adds value to our business. If it helps you, your co-workers, our target audiences, or our partners to perform well and solve problems; if it promotes our work or our Vision, then it is adding value.
- Take care when sharing any personal information online. Though not directly Paddle Cymru related, background information you choose to share about yourself, such as information about your family or personal interests, may be useful in helping establish a relationship between you and your readers, but it is your decision to share this information. By revealing certain details, you might be more vulnerable to identity theft.
- Avoid being defensive in response to negative or false comments. When you see inaccuracies articulated about Paddle Cymru or related by partners, journalists or by other bloggers, you may politely and sensitively point out the situation as you see it.
- Be the first to correct your own mistakes and do not alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.
- Be prepared for a two-way conversation. And be aware that people are entitled to their views. You must make sure that what you say is factual and avoid unnecessary or unproductive arguments.
- Manage offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity. If a conversation turns and becomes offensive in terms of language or sentiment, make sure you inform your audience exactly why you have removed the comment. A few sentences should suffice, like: "This comment was removed because moderators found the content offensive. I will respond to your comments but please respect the views of everybody who comes here."

- React to your own mistakes and use your judgment. If you make a mistake, be up front about your error and correct it quickly. In a blog, if you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.
- Remember that there are consequences to what you publish. If you are about to publish something that makes you uncomfortable, review the suggestions in this document. If you are still uncertain, discuss it with your manager. However, you have sole responsibility for what you post online.
- Make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job, and do not talk about Paddle Cymru in a derogatory way. Again, do not write anything that you would not write on Paddle Cymru headed paper or talk about in a pub.
- Aim to keep our posts welcoming and accessible by using simple fonts, clear colours, and imagery that everyone can connect with.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk is Paddle Cymru's highest priority. This commitment extends to our use of social media. All employees, volunteers, contractors, and representatives must ensure that their online behaviour upholds the principles of Paddle Cymru's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Any content shared, whether on personal or professional accounts must reflect our duty of care and promote a safe and respectful environment.

Key Safeguarding Expectations for Social Media Use

- Staff, coaches, and volunteers must not engage in private or direct messaging with children or young people under 18 years of age. All communication should take place via approved group channels, with appropriate transparency and oversight.
- Photographs, videos, or personal details of participants, especially those under 18 must not be posted without explicit, informed consent from a parent or guardian. This includes tagging individuals in posts.
- Ensure all posts, comments, and interactions are age-appropriate, inclusive, and free from suggestive, discriminatory, or harmful language or content.
- If you see or receive concerning content, inappropriate contact, or safeguarding risks on social media, you must report it immediately to Paddle Cymru's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not engage, delete, or attempt to manage the situation yourself.
- Maintain a clear separation between your personal and professional role online. Staff and volunteers should not 'friend' or 'follow' young participants on their personal social media accounts.
- Avoid tagging young people or engaging in banter with them via public posts. Even well-meaning interactions may blur professional boundaries or appear inappropriate to others.

By adhering to these principles, we ensure that social media remains a safe, respectful, and positive space for promoting our sport and engaging with the community.

For full guidance, refer to the Paddle Cymru Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Monitoring and Enforcement

Paddle Cymru expects all employees, volunteers, contractors, and representatives to adhere to this Social Media Policy as part of their professional responsibilities. While we trust our people to use good judgment, we also recognise the importance of consistency, accountability, and risk management in our online presence.

Monitoring Activity

- Paddle Cymru reserves the right to review publicly available social media content, including personal profiles, where these are linked to the organisation (e.g., through profile descriptions, tagging, or shared affiliations).
- We may monitor official accounts and activities to ensure alignment with organisational values and compliance with legal and regulatory standards.
- Social media content may be reviewed in the context of:
 - Recruitment and vetting processes
 - Safeguarding investigations
 - Disciplinary investigations
 - Reputational risk assessments

We do not routinely monitor private communications or personal accounts unless a specific concern or complaint is raised that falls within the scope of this policy or related policies (e.g. safeguarding, bullying and harassment, or data protection).

Breaches of Policy

Failure to comply with this Social Media policy may result in formal action under Paddle Cymru's disciplinary or grievance procedures.

This includes, but not limited to:

- Posting discriminatory, defamatory, or offensive content
- Breaching confidentiality or data protection law
- Damaging the organisation's reputation or stakeholder relationships
- Ignoring safeguarding responsibilities or failing to report concerns

Escalation and Support

If you are unsure whether a post, comment, or interaction may breach this policy, you are encouraged to seek advice from your line manager, the Communications Lead, or the CEO. Concerns about social media use, whether internal or external, should be reported promptly and will be managed sensitively and in line with Paddle Cymru's Whistleblowing and Safeguarding policies.

Paddle Cymru's Protocol for Social Media Use

- If you already use social networks or blogs for personal use and you have indicated in any way that you work for Paddle Cymru, you should add a disclaimer that states that opinions on this site are your own.
- Remember that if you break the law using social media (for example by posting something defamatory), you will be personally responsible.
- If someone from the media or press contacts you about posts you have made using social media, you should talk to the CEO before responding.
- Paddle Cymru reserves the right to view public social media profiles and online posts as part of recruitment and/or investigations.

Remember, your professional and personal reputation can take years to build and one tweet to destroy.