



Social Media Policy

Introduction Statement

Social media encompasses web-based tools and applications which allow a person or organisation to network with others and share content such as information, opinions, and knowledge. Clubs, societies, and organisations use social media sharing to maintain contact with, and develop contact with, others with common interests. The use of social media can be essential to the success of an organisation to engage with a wider audience or to raise their profile.

Derby and District Astronomical Society (hereinafter referred to as “DDAS” “the Society” “we” or “our”) uses social media as communication with the public, other organisations, and members (hereinafter referred to as “members” or “you”). The Committee are also members.

Prominent widely used examples of social media include but are not limited to, Facebook and Instagram. Other resources such as LinkedIn, WhatsApp or any form of leaflet/flyer or advertising may not obviously be associated with the phrase social media but they can also be considered to be social media. There are many other examples.

DDAS encourages the use of social media but to maintain a uniform approach the Society has certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require you to follow. This policy is not intended to inhibit members use of social media but to ensure that the aims, objectives, and values of DDAS are accurately represented in any publication. Publication and commentary on social media bring similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain. This policy is intended for all members and applies to content posted in official DDAS communication and members personal communication that may have an associated (intended or otherwise) relevance to DDAS.

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of DDAS, and the use of social media by members in both a society and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help you support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting DDAS reputation and preventing any legal issues.

The Society responsibility

DDAS Committee may appoint a member(s) with responsibility for setting up and managing social media channels and may authorise or refuse anyone access to these channels. Such appointments are commonly referred to as Admin or Moderator although one person may perform more than one role.

DDAS Committee has appointed a Public Relations Officer (PRO) who will work closely with the Chairperson, the Committee, and any Admin or Moderator to ensure that all social media content accurately reflects DDAS agreed position to promote astronomy as fun for all and uphold the wider objectives and values of the Society. Sharing responsibility for social media across more than one Committee member ensures that all such communication reflects the aims and policy of DDAS as a whole and not just the opinion of one person.

DDAS is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties.

Members responsibility

- Be an ambassador for our brand. Members should ensure they reflect the Society values in what they post on social media channels
- DDAS does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the Society members are expected to carefully hold a position of neutrality
- Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
- Take care with the presentation of content and check the quality of images. Members are encouraged to contribute content for our social media
- Be aware that any published content may be viewed by children, young or potentially vulnerable persons
- Members should not promote other organisations services or goods without their express permission and without approval from the Society. Such content should be clearly labelled that DDAS does not specifically promote such service or goods
- If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child, young or potentially vulnerable person, members must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before publishing
- Members should refrain from offering personal opinions via DDAS social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about a position on a particular issue, please speak to our PRO
- Members should not set up any other social media channels on behalf of the Society. By having official social media accounts in place, we can ensure consistency and focus on building a strong following

- Members should not encourage people to break the law or to risk injury to supply material for social media or use unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material
- Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the Society. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of DDAS. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about our work, you must use a disclaimer such as: *"The views expressed are my own and do not necessarily represent Derby and District Astronomical Society's position, policy or opinion"*
- If a member comes across content that is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Chairperson and PRO who will consider an appropriate response
- Members who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they are a member of DDAS should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the PRO. Similarly, members who want to start blogging and wish to say that they are a member of DDAS should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the PRO
- Members in Committee roles who are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as representing the Society's view
- If you are contacted by the press about social media posts or activity that relates to the Society, you should talk to the PRO immediately and *under no circumstances respond directly*
- Members should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official DDAS social media channel or a personal account
- Never use DDAS logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Chairperson.

Good practice

Always pause and think before posting but reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. Always check facts. 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.

Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with the Society and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, fellow members, and other organisations.

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. You may think that you have restricted access by a wider audience however this is not always the case. The purpose of social media is to quickly and widely spread content irrespective of perceived restrictions.

Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Do not insult people or treat them badly. You should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

Complaints

Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can quickly escalate because they are sensitive or can risk severe damage to the reputation of the Society or a member. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the Society. If you become aware of any comments online that you think has the potential to escalate, whether on the Society's social media channels or elsewhere, you should speak to the PRO immediately.

Members should not respond directly to a complaint but must bring it to the attention of the PRO immediately or in absence, to the Chairperson. An appropriate response will be considered and if necessary, dealt with in a timely manner. The ultimate responsibility to respond to a complain lies with the Chairperson and/or PRO or an otherwise appointed Committee member.

Law

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. When you are posting content on social media you should not bring DDAS into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals, other organisations, or groups.

Copyright law. It is critical that all members abide by the laws governing copyright, 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.

Children and potentially vulnerable persons

Children, young people, and vulnerable adults are at increased risk 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. When communicating with children or such potentially vulnerable persons via social media, members should give guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Members should also ensure that any content is suitable for the young person and DDAS content or other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our Safeguarding also Policy.

Version Control:

This Version 1 first drafted June 2025 and adopted by Committee 17 September 2025.