

Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

Document Metadata

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out how WES and its representatives use social media to promote the Society, engage with members, and protect the organisation's reputation. It applies across public platforms, private groups, and semi-official messaging and aims to ensure communications remain respectful, accurate, and aligned with WES values.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All WES-branded or affiliated social media accounts
- Council, Officers, Area Reps, WES Professionals, and volunteers representing WES
- Content shared on personal accounts when referencing WES in an official or visible capacity
- Public pages, private groups, and messaging channels (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp)

It covers:

- Account management
- Use of WES branding
- Behaviour and content standards
- Member protection and privacy
- Escalation and breach procedures

3. Definitions

- **Official account:** A social media profile managed on behalf of WES (e.g. @wes_uk on Instagram)
- **Representative:** Any person acting in a role under the WES umbrella (Council, Area Rep, WES Pro)
- **Semi-official space:** A private group or WhatsApp channel used for WES-related communication
- **Defamatory content:** Comments that damage reputation, mislead, or incite conflict

4. Policy Statement

WES supports the use of social media to promote western riding, build community, and share news. All content associated with WES must be accurate, respectful, and positive in tone — even when addressing difficult topics.

We expect those representing WES to uphold the same standards online as they would in person.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Secretary	Maintains this policy, oversees platform access and complaints
Social Media Lead	Posts on behalf of WES; manages branding and tone consistency
Area Reps	May share local news and events in line with guidance
Council Members	May contribute content and request official posts
Members	Encouraged to tag or share WES content respectfully

6. Policy Detail / Procedures

6.1 Use of WES Accounts

- Official accounts are managed centrally by approved volunteers or Officers
- Login credentials must be stored securely and not shared without authorisation
- Content should be informative, inclusive, and relevant to the WES audience
- Personal opinions must never be shared via official channels
- No political, religious, or unrelated commercial content may be posted

6.2 Use of Personal Accounts

Individuals may post about their WES involvement but must:

- Avoid implying they speak on behalf of WES unless authorised
- Refrain from sharing confidential or sensitive information
- Tag WES accounts or use hashtags with care and appropriateness
- Be mindful that tone and language reflect on the organisation

Members acting in a role (e.g. Area Rep or Pro) must not criticise WES decisions or individuals publicly. Internal concerns must be raised through proper channels.

6.3 Use of WhatsApp and Private Groups

- Informal groups (e.g. Area Rep or WES Pro WhatsApp) should be used constructively
- Screenshots must not be shared externally without consent
- No gossip, conflict escalation, or undermining of volunteers is acceptable
- Any safeguarding, disciplinary, or welfare concerns must be referred offline and formally

6.4 Event and Member Imagery

- Photos of members or horses should only be posted with consent
- WES may publish event images unless members opt out in advance
- Images must reflect horse welfare and safety standards
- Content that could be misinterpreted (e.g. horse in distress, tack errors) should be avoided

6.5 Managing Conflicts and Complaints

- Comments that are rude, aggressive, or inaccurate may be hidden or removed
- Breaches will be reviewed by the Secretary and Chair
- Serious cases may result in post deletion, restriction from posting, or disciplinary action

7. Related Policies and References

- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Membership Communications Policy
- Animal Welfare Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Area Rep Facebook Guidance (Templates folder)

8. Compliance and Breach Handling

Misuse of WES-affiliated social media — including offensive posts, unauthorised announcements, or reputational damage — may result in:

- Removal of content
- Loss of access to accounts or platforms
- Formal warnings or suspension from roles
- Referral under the Disciplinary Procedure

Social media is not an appropriate venue to air personal disputes or unresolved complaints.

9. Review and Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes Made
0.1	23/07/2025	DG	Initial policy draft
0.5	08/10/2025	DG	Updated post Chairman's review
1.0	06/11/2025	DG	Published

10. Approval Record

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