Social Media Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out how South Cumbria Skills Exchange (SCSE), operated by Whamos Training and Development CIC, uses social media as an organisation, and what we expect of staff, volunteers, contractors and learners in their use of social media.

Social media is a significant route for SCSE's communication, marketing and learner-engagement work, particularly given our filmmaking and documentary focus. It also presents safeguarding, professional-conduct, and reputational risks that this policy addresses.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Use of SCSE official social media accounts
- Personal social media use by staff, volunteers and contractors where it intersects with their SCSE role
- Learner use of social media in connection with SCSE — including any platforms used as part of learning, any SCSE-related content learners create, and any conduct that affects another member of the SCSE community

It covers all platforms current and emerging, including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, Vimeo, Threads, WhatsApp, Discord, Snapchat, and any others used in SCSE's communications work.

3. SCSE official social media

SCSE maintains official social media presence to:

- Communicate our offer to commissioning bodies, schools and prospective learners
- Showcase learner work (with consent — see Photography, Filming and Image Use Policy)
- Share organisational news and milestones
- Engage with the wider AP, education and filmmaking communities

Official accounts are operated by the Directors. No one else posts as SCSE without explicit authorisation. Account credentials are held securely and changed when there is any change of access.

All public posts are reviewed against:

- Image consent (no learner image is posted without the specific consent recorded in their file)
- Confidentiality (no identifying details of placements, safeguarding matters or personal circumstances)
- Accuracy

- Tone and brand
- Whether the post could foreseeably affect the wellbeing or safety of any learner or staff member

4. Staff use of personal social media

We respect staff members' rights to private use of social media in their personal lives. However, given the nature of work with vulnerable children and young people, certain expectations apply regardless of whether posts are made in or out of working hours, and whether or not SCSE is named.

Staff, volunteers and contractors must:

Do:

- Use privacy settings to limit who can see personal content
- Apply professional judgement to anything that could be seen by a learner, parent/carer, commissioning body or member of the public
- Report to the Directors if they become aware of any social media content (their own or others') that could compromise SCSE or its learners

Do not:

- Accept friend/follow/connect requests from current learners on personal accounts
- Initiate contact with current learners or their families via personal accounts
- Communicate with learners about SCSE matters through any personal social media or messaging channel — only via approved SCSE channels
- Post content that identifies or could identify a learner, including photographs, descriptions of behaviour or progress, or references to placements
- Post content that brings SCSE into disrepute, including content that is discriminatory, defamatory, sexually explicit, glorifies violence or substance misuse, or expresses extremist views
- Disclose confidential SCSE information including safeguarding concerns, business plans, financial information, internal personnel matters, or details of any third-party relationship
- Speak in a personal capacity on a matter in a way that could reasonably be taken as SCSE's position; where role is mentioned, a disclaimer is added: "Views my own, not those of my employer"
- Post photographs from SCSE premises or activities without permission and consent

5. Where staff have prior connections with a learner's family

In a small community such as Millom, staff may have pre-existing social or family connections with learners' parents or carers. Where this is the case the staff member must:

- Declare the connection to the Directors at the start of placement (see Conflict of Interest Policy)
- Maintain a strict separation between the social relationship and the professional relationship
- Avoid any communication about SCSE business via the social connection
- Where any safeguarding matter arises that involves the learner, immediately step back from any contact and inform the DSL

6. Learner use of social media in connection with SCSE

Where learners use social media as part of SCSE activity (for example, creating content for a filmmaking project intended for a public platform), expectations include:

- Compliance with the age limits set by each platform (most are 13+)
- Adherence to platform community standards
- Not posting identifying information about peers without consent
- Not posting content from SCSE premises without consent from those identifiable
- Awareness of the permanence of online content and the implications for future employment and education

These expectations are included in the learner induction, in age-appropriate form.

7. Communication channels for SCSE business

The only approved channels for staff-to-learner and staff-to-parent communication are:

- SCSE-issued email accounts
- SCSE-managed messaging platform (where in use), with logging enabled
- Telephone, using SCSE-issued numbers wherever possible
- In person on SCSE premises

Personal email, personal phone (texts, WhatsApp, etc.), personal social media accounts and personal messaging platforms must not be used for SCSE business in any direction.

Where a member of staff inadvertently receives a message from a learner or parent on a personal account, they:

- Do not respond on that channel
- Notify a Director the same day
- Reply, if a reply is appropriate, only via an approved channel

8. Online safeguarding

If a member of staff sees any of the following on social media, they report it to the DSL the same day:

- A current learner posting content that suggests they are at risk of harm (self-harm, suicidal ideation, abuse, exploitation, radicalisation)
- A current learner being targeted on social media (cyberbullying, harassment, grooming, sextortion)
- Suspicious approaches to learners by adults
- Content that suggests a learner is being drawn into criminal activity (county lines indicators, gang activity)
- Content where a learner is identifying themselves as connected to SCSE in a way that creates risk

For ongoing concerns about a learner's social media use, the Online Safety / E-Safety Policy applies. For one-off urgent concerns, the Safeguarding Policy applies.

9. Protecting staff from social media harm

We recognise that staff working in AP can themselves become targets of social media harassment — by learners, by parents/carers, by former staff, or by members of the public who disagree with our work. Where this happens:

- The affected staff member tells the Directors
- Evidence is preserved (screenshots, timestamps, links)
- A risk assessment is made
- Where the harassment is criminal or comes from a young person who is being safeguarded, the appropriate referral or police report is made
- The staff member is supported, including signposting to professional support if needed
- No staff member is expected to engage personally with harassers, or to "manage it themselves"

10. Images of staff online

Staff have control over their own image. SCSE will not require any staff member to appear in marketing or social media against their preference. Where a staff member's image is used for SCSE purposes (e.g. on a "meet the team" page), consent is given in writing and can be withdrawn at any time.

11. Use of platforms specifically

A small set of platform-specific notes:

- **Facebook / Instagram (Meta):** SCSE's primary public-facing platforms. All posts reviewed by a Director before publication. Comments are moderated.

- **TikTok:** Used selectively for short-form creative content from filmmaking projects, only where consent permits and platform age restrictions are respected.
- **LinkedIn:** Used by Directors and staff in professional capacity. Connections with current learners or their parents are not added on LinkedIn during placement.
- **YouTube / Vimeo:** Used for filmmaking output. All material posted there is governed by the Photography, Filming and Image Use Policy.
- **WhatsApp / messaging apps:** Not used as a primary communication channel with learners or parents. Group messaging within the SCSE staff team is permitted only via approved tools, not personal WhatsApp groups.

12. Records and monitoring

SCSE maintains a record of:

- Each post made on official social media (date, platform, content, who approved it, what consents underpinned it)
- Any incident involving social media that triggered this policy
- Trends and lessons learnt, reviewed by Directors quarterly

Personal social media use by staff is not routinely monitored. Where a credible report of a breach is received, the Directors investigate proportionately and in line with the Conduct and Disciplinary procedures.

13. Training

All staff complete:

- An induction briefing on this policy
- An annual refresher on social media safeguarding implications
- Specific training before being authorised to post on SCSE official channels

14. Breach of policy

Breaches of this policy are managed via:

- A learner breach — addressed via the behaviour and pastoral approach, with safeguarding referral where appropriate
- A staff breach — addressed via the Disciplinary Policy, which may result in formal sanction up to and including dismissal in serious cases
- A volunteer or contractor breach — addressed via termination of the volunteer or contractor relationship and, where appropriate, referral to other safeguarding bodies

Where a breach is itself a safeguarding matter (e.g. inappropriate contact with a learner via personal social media), the Safeguarding Policy and LADO procedures apply.

15. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside:

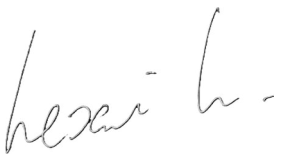
- Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Online Safety / E-Safety Policy
- Photography, Filming and Image Use Policy
- Confidentiality Policy and Agreement
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

16. Policy review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Directors, or sooner if the social media landscape, statutory guidance, or SCSE's use of social media changes.

Approval & Review

This policy has been approved on behalf of the Directors:

Elizabeth Amos-Milburn *Co-Director*	**Alexandra Gager-Liebhart** *Co-Director*
	

Date of approval: 18th May 2026

Next review: 18th May 2027

Schedule 1 — Record of Changes

Version	Date	Nature of Change
001	18th May 2026	Initial published version included in the Combined Policies and Procedures 2026 edition.