



# International Sheep Dog Society

International Sheep Dog Society • Clifton House • 4a Goldington Road • Bedford • MK40 3NF • United Kingdom

Tel: +44(0)1234 352672 • Fax: +44(0)1234 348214 • Email: office@isds.org.uk • www.isds.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 209009 VAT No. 258 9240 30

## Social Media Guidance for Members of The International Sheep Dog Society

(May 2024)

### Purpose

The International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS) recognizes the importance of social media in today's world and encourages its members to engage with each other and the wider community responsibly and positively.

The ISDS uses social media in its work and recognises that many of its members may also use social media both professionally and personally. Social media use is governed by several laws and the ISDS has a positive reputation which is extremely important in delivering our charitable work.

This policy outlines guidelines and expectations for ISDS members, employees, and its community when using social media platforms.

As a very simple guide, you may be breaking the law, if you post (or potentially repost) anything that may fall into any of the following categories:

- **Harassment of others** - not leaving someone alone.
- **Menacing behaviour** – writing something that may scare or distress someone.
- **Threatening behaviour** – making someone believe that you were going to cause them harm.
- **Grossly offensive behaviour** – making deeply unpleasant and/or inappropriate comments about a sensitive issue.
- **Libel** - a post is potentially libellous if it is a false statement and may damage someone's reputation.
- **Defamation** - users may be sued for defamation if they post an unsubstantiated rumour about someone.
- **Data protection** – breaching an individual's right to privacy.
- **Copyright** – posting material without permission that is owned by another person or organisation.

A written policy is therefore required for members (incl. trustees) on the acceptable use of social networking.

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The ISDS encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to set out what the Society expects from its members when using social media.

## It aims to:

- Give clear guidelines on what members can say about the organisation.
- Comply with relevant legislation and protect members.
- Help members draw a line between their private lives and their membership of the Society.
- Protect the ISDS against possible liability for the actions of its members.
- Be clear about sensitive issues and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

It is important to remember that all members are ambassadors for the ISDS, and that social media is never “private”.

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The ISDS recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on topics relevant to the charity’s work through the use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, X (formerly twitter), Instagram, TikTok, YouTube etc. This policy aims to protect members networking on the Society’s media by encouraging you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgment and common sense.
- 1.2. Inappropriate use of social media platforms can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information, as well as the reputation of the ISDS, and can jeopardise the Society’s compliance with its legal obligations.
- 1.3. To minimise these risks and to ensure that all ISDS resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, the Society therefore expects all members to adhere to this policy.
- 1.4. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the ISDS being discredited and leave any associated member the subject of possible disciplinary sanctions. The ISDS trustees are responsible for addressing any issues raised.

## 2. Scope and purpose of the policy

- 2.1 Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, blogs, images, and video content), and

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network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge, and common interests.

- 2.2 The ISDS uses Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The CEO and Assistant to the CEO are responsible for setting up and managing the accounts. They may appoint local trials secretaries as administrative rights on the National Facebook pages for the duration of their Nationals, and they must not give anyone else administrative rights unless permission is granted from the CEO.
- 2.3 This policy is not intended to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Members are expected to behave appropriately and in ways that are consistent with the ISDS's values and policies, both online and in real life. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the ISDS. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the ISDS. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about the work of the ISDS, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed are my own and don't necessarily represent The International Sheep Dog Society's positions, policies or opinions."
- 2.4 Members may be required to remove social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy.
- 2.5 This policy links to all other policies therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the ISDS's other policies, such as equal opportunities, data protection etc.
- 2.6 Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the CEO.

### 3. Guidelines for the responsible use of social media

The following sections of the policy provide members with guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

- 3.1 The Society expects members you to help protect the ISDS's reputation. Members must therefore not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:
  - i. The International Sheep Dog Society.
  - ii. The ISDS office holders or other members past or present.
  - iii. Other affiliates and stakeholders.

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- 3.2 Members should avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage the reputation of the ISDS, even indirectly.
- 3.3 Members are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media. Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by many people including other members, future employers, and social acquaintances for years to come. Always keep this in mind before you post content.
- 3.4 Members should be honest and say what you know to be true or have a good source for the information. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
- 3.5 Members must not post content about other members or supporters without their express permission. If members are sharing information about other members, supporters or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from the ISDS. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, members must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
- 3.6 The ISDS does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18 without permission from a legal guardian.
- 3.7 Members are responsible for the security settings of any social media sites they use and should ensure they are set to the appropriate level if they wish to limit who can see their information.
- 3.8 Members must remember to always respect confidentiality and protect confidential information. You should be mindful of data protection issues, if in doubt speak to the ISDS. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about the work of the ISDS, details of current projects, future projects, financial information, or information held on members or supporters.
- 3.9 Contact details of members are subject to data protection. Members are not permitted to access or store information on any other members that would breach data protection.
- 3.10 Avoid posting comments about sensitive ISDS related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views do not represent those of the ISDS, your comments could still damage the Society's reputation. If in any doubt about responding to issues that may be sensitive, pause and reflect before replying.

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- 3.11 If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making communication of this to them yourself and get in touch with the CEO or any trustees.
- 3.12 If any member sees content on social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the ISDS they should report it to the CEO or any trustees. All members are responsible for protecting the reputation of the ISDS.
- 3.13 Members must not use the ISDS social media to circulate or share chain letters or other spam. Circulating, posting, or sharing commercial, personal, religious, or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the work of the ISDS is also prohibited.
- 3.14 Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the reputation of the ISDS. Examples might include posting videos to demonstrate a dog's power, but in fact demonstrate unacceptable stockmanship. The nature of social media also means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Should this situation arise it should be immediately reported to the CEO or any trustees.
- 3.15 Not acting on bad practice and complaints can be detrimental to the charity. The Secretary and Treasurer monitors social media so that any issues or problems can be caught early. If any member becomes aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on the Society's social media or elsewhere, they should speak to the Secretary and Treasurer.
- 3.16 Members must never use the ISDS logos unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the CEO who will then discuss with trustees if necessary.
- 3.17 Members should think about their reputation as well as the reputation of the ISDS, and express opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Members must not insult people or treat them disrespectfully. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions.
- 3.18 Abusive comments or "trolling" will not be tolerated. A troll is someone who intentionally causes upset, harm, distress, or offence by provoking people online. Be careful not to confuse a troll with someone who is critical and/or upset. There will be people who have valid concerns or have a genuine complaint that may come across as angry and irate. Trolls often have a profile picture that is an object, rather than a person,

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or no profile image at all. People who are abusive are usually trying to provoke a reaction from you, so don't give them what they want. In this instance, use the relevant abuse reporting system, block them and, if you think they are committing a crime, report them to the police.

3.19 Remember that most of our communication is through body language and voice tone/loudness etc. and the amount of written text in social media can be limited, so meaning behind it can easily be lost. What may appear light-hearted and funny to you, may potentially come across very differently on social media. Also, consider potential social and/or cultural differences in your audience who may be more sensitive to issues or subjects than the wider population.

## 4. Social Media Policy Summary

### 4.1 Professional Conduct

Members are expected to maintain a professional demeanour and uphold the values and reputation of the ISDS when using social media platforms.

### 4.2 Respect and Courtesy

Members must demonstrate respect and courtesy towards fellow members, competitors, judges, and all individuals associated with the ISDS and the wider community online in their social media interactions.

### 4.3 Accuracy and Integrity

Members should ensure that information shared on social media platforms is accurate, truthful, and respectful of intellectual property rights.

### 4.4 Representing the ISDS

When identifying themselves as members of the ISDS on social media, members should make it clear that their views are personal and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ISDS organisation.

### 4.5 Avoiding Conflict of Interest

Members should avoid engaging in activities on social media platforms that could create a conflict of interest with their roles within the ISDS.

### 4.6 ISDS Trials & Events

While it is acceptable to share personal experiences and achievements related to ISDS competitions and events, members should refrain from making disparaging remarks or engaging in disrespectful behaviour towards other participants or officials.

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## 4.7 Consequences of Policy Violations

Violation of this social media policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to reprimand, suspension, or termination of ISDS membership.

## 4.8 Acknowledgment

By continuing their membership with the ISDS, members acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to comply with the provisions outlined in this social media policy.

**For questions or concerns regarding this policy, members may contact the CEO or ISDS Trustees.**

**This social media policy is subject to periodic review and revision by the ISDS to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance.**

**Next review: May 2025**

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