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|  Hitchmough’s Riding School  |
| Social Media Policy |
| 08/03/2022 |

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**Social Media Policy**

Introduction

Social media gives individuals, groups, organisations, and businesses the opportunity to instantly share information with online communities. Blogs, forums, social networking, and video sharing sites are the most popular types of social media sites, however, any forum which allows a user to upload and share information is considered part of the social media space. It is also important to note that information that is shared need not be written; it could take the form of an image or audio-visual material. Hitchmough’s Riding School supports the use of social media as a timely and effective method of communication. In addition to engaging with stakeholders in the equestrian community, social media can help the organisation reach members of the broader public and traditional media. Hitchmough’s Riding School proactively seeks positive media coverage and does so for the benefit of all its stakeholders. Traditionally this media coverage has been through TV, radio, and print media outlets however the rise of social media has widened this landscape. Whilst social media provides Hitchmough’s Riding School with a great opportunity to raise the business’ profile and reach new audiences, it also has the potential to harm the reputation of the organisation and its stakeholders. It is crucial therefore that all Hitchmough’s Riding School ‘persons bound’ are aware of the implications of using social media. The purpose of this document is to provide ‘persons bound’ with guiding principles for using social media. Hitchmough’s Riding School encourages anyone bound by this policy to use social media within the parameters outlined in this policy.

Policy Application

This policy applies to all Management, employees, livery and riding school clients and any associated interested persons who have some form of ‘duty’ on behalf of Hitchmough’s Riding School, hereinafter referred to as ‘persons bound’. Hitchmough’s Riding School ‘persons bound’ have the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the business, simply by maintaining an online presence. All forms of social media activity are covered under this policy, including, but not limited to:

* Creating and maintaining social or business networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.
* Sharing audio-visual content on sites including Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest (photo sharing) and YouTube and Vimeo (video sharing) and Snapchat.
* Authoring, Administrating, and commenting on blogs or forums

Core Principles

Persons bound by this policy should be mindful that information shared on social media appears in public so careful consideration should be given to content before it is posted. Never forget that information shared within online communities could have implications for the sport and those associated with it. Information which is shared online can be difficult to retract. A representative might be able to remove his/her original comments however the very nature of social media encourages a person to share information which makes it difficult to know where the information they post finishes up. Persons bound by this policy should assume that all posts and information they share via social media can be traced back to them. Adhering to this Policy, Hitchmough’s Riding School will ensure its reputation is protected.

* Persons bound by this policy should ensure that comments made on social media should
1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.
2. Refrain from any form of harassment of others.
3. Refrain from any behaviour that may bring Hitchmough’s Riding School into disrepute.
* Persons are advised to view the applicable Hitchmough’s Riding School Codes of Conduct in conjunction with this Policy.
* Comments which are contrary to the spirit and integrity of sport will not be tolerated. Persons bound by this policy who share information online should consider themselves representative of the organisation and must never reveal confidential or sensitive information that could jeopardise Hitchmough’s Riding School’s relationships with the public or its clients.
* Personal sites, blogs and accounts that have a Hitchmough’s Riding School ‘look and feel’ and could be perceived as being Hitchmough’s Riding School is strictly prohibited.

Hitchmough’s Riding School Social Media Platforms

Hitchmough’s Riding School recognises that members of the public are entitled to voice their opinion and welcome engagement through the Hitchmough’s Riding School social media platforms. These social media platforms include but are not limited to Hitchmough’s Riding School Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp.

Through the above platforms, we proactively communicate and engage with our followers. We post information on a range of relevant topics. We share updates to keep you informed on activities or developments at our Centre and may frequently ask you for feedback or your opinion. We may share permissible photos and content from related parties and choose to answer questions, offer praise and any address any concerns through private messaging, as required. Where needed we react to post on threads to answer questions, to clarify our position and offer help and promote our services and activities.

All our content is:

* prompt - we respond to all posts and messages asap
* precise - where we’re not sure of an answer or response we will seek further clarification
* timely - related to current news or events, wherever possible
* regular - we aim to provide regular posts
* transparent- we operate an open culture, but we reserve the right to remove negative or complaining content (see the ‘what is not allowed’ criteria below)

Content as identified as above, plus:

* employment opportunities
* livery vacancies
* upcoming events at our centre
* informal engagement with users, e.g., asking what you did with your horse or if you enjoyed your lesson.

However, Hitchmough’s Riding School will not tolerate any of the following on its social media pages and comments, images, videos, and other material which are posted on these platforms will be removed if found to be:

1. Defamatory material
2. Material infringing copyright or intellectual property rights
3. Material in breach of privacy or confidentiality obligation
4. Offensive, obscene, or sexual material
5. Threatening, abusive or insulting statements likely to stir up hatred

Breach

Where it is alleged that a ‘person bound’ by this policy violates any of the core principles as stated above, the Hitchmough’s Riding School proprietor has the right to issue this individual with take-down notice with immediate effect. Further, Hitchmough’s Riding School reserves all rights to take direct legal action where appropriate.

Legislation

As with any form of public communication, online communication can also be subject to legislation including but not limited to the Defamation Act 2009 and the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. Persons bound by this policy should be mindful that unsubstantiated claims, false statements, defamatory, offensive, and threatening comments could lead to litigation and or prosecution.

Amendments/Interpretation

This Policy may be amended by Hitchmough’s Riding School as it deems appropriate. The proprietor of Hitchmough’s Riding School will be the ultimate authority with respect to the interpretation and implementation of this Policy.

Disclaimer

Hitchmough’s Riding School believes all material produced for this publication is correctly and accurately researched. However, we give no warranty in relation thereto and disclaim liability for all claims against the organisation its employees or any person associated, which may arise from any material contained within its pages that may be challenged by any persons.

Conclusion

Hitchmough’s Riding School understands that social media is a new method of communication and as such encourages all persons bound by this policy to seek clarification from the Hitchmough’s Riding School managements if they are unsure what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate content.