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1. Introduction

This policy is intended for all staff, trustees, and external advisors, and applies to content posted on both the Foundation's social media accounts and on personal social media accounts.

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the objectives of the Foundation, and our expectations of, and requirements for, the conduct of staff, trustees and external advisors when using social media in both a professional and personal capacities.

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Bluesky, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn and Instagram. It is important for staff to participate in social media to engage with current and future grant holders/applicants, and others, participate in relevant conversations. As such, it is an essential tool in the toolkit of methods used to profile the Trust's work.

The Foundation uses the following social media channels:

- You Tube - @vivensafoundation
- LinkedIn – The Vivensa Foundation
- Bluesky – @vivensa.bsky.social

We use these accounts to announce funding calls, new awards and our events. We amplify the outcomes, success stories and news of our grant holders and other partners, as well as policy matters related to our mission. We also advertise vacancies for staff, trustees, external advisors and panel members.

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

2. Using the Foundation's social media channels – appropriate conduct

The Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Senior Communications Manager is responsible for setting up and managing Trust's social media channels. The Foundation only publishes content under the name of the Vivensa Foundation. All staff members have access to these accounts and have responsibilities for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of them. Staff should also read and be aware of the contents of sections 23 and 24 of the Staff Handbook regarding electronic information and communications and social media use.

- All social media content must accurately reflect the Foundation's mission and values.
- Care must be taken with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, mis-spellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images. Always pause and think before posting.
- Content should not be posted about partners or other organisations or individuals without their express permission. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a person, consent must be obtained.
- Always check facts. Do not automatically assume that material is accurate, take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
- Refrain from offering personal opinions via the Foundation's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', or 'sharing'. If you are in doubt about the Foundation's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Chief Executive.

3. Use of personal social media accounts - appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead highlights those areas in which conflicts might arise. The Vivensa Foundation staff, trustees and external advisors are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with the Trust's values and policies, both online and in real life.

Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the Foundation. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the Foundation. If you use your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about the Foundation's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: *"The views expressed here are my own and don't necessarily represent The Vivensa Foundation's positions, policies or opinions."*

Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at the Vivensa Foundation should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Chief Executive.

Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for the Vivensa Foundation should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the Chief Executive.

Those in roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing the Foundation's view.

Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with the Foundation and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to others.

If you are contacted by the press about social media posts that relate to the Foundation, you should talk to the Chief Executive immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

The Foundation is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing the Vivensa Foundation, staff, trustees and external advisors are expected to hold the Foundation's position of neutrality. Staff, trustees or external advisors who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from the Foundation and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Never use the Vivensa Foundation's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the Chief Executive.

Always protect yourself and the Foundation. 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. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely. You can find more information on your responsibilities when using our computer systems in our Information Security Policy.

Think about your reputation as well as the Foundation's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

We encourage staff, trustees and external advisors to share posts that we have made. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support the Foundation and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff, trustees and external advisors to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the Chief Executive who will respond as appropriate.

4. Further guidance

Libel - Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. When posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, staff, trustees and external advisors should not bring the Foundation into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright Law - It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under 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.

Confidentiality - Any communications made in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that the Foundation is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment - Do not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Foundation social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Use of social media in the recruitment process - There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision.

Protection and intervention - The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. However, if a staff member, trustee or external advisor considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the Chief Executive immediately. There is no expectation that Trustees monitor the personal social media accounts of staff or others connected with the Foundation. However, if they become aware of content posted or shared by an individual being associated with and having a negative effect on the Foundation, they should contact the Chief Executive or Chair.

Responsibilities and breach of policy - Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of the Trust is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to the staff handbook for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Chief Executive.

Public Interest Disclosure - Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if information is released through Trust's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, its Whistleblowing Policy must be initiated before any further action is taken.