WWF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Social media is in the public eye. So, as employees, we're bound by the same expectations of behaviour as we would be within any public arena. But, due to the nature of social media, the scale of the risk associated with it is higher when compared with other potential issues.

On social media, issues can escalate rapidly. And, because we encourage our employees to use their personal social media to support and activate our work, there is greater potential for others to see personal opinion as the official view of WWF.

We've developed this policy to give everyone the information they need to engage responsibly and fully in social media activity, privately and professionally.

What happens when issues occur?

We do not actively monitor employees' social media accounts at WWF. But in the unlikely instance of misuse – i.e. where social media activity results in damage to WWF's reputation - we may have to take disciplinary action.

This will follow our existing procedures on issue management (a discussion with employee and manager first, followed by involvement with HR if needed). It's possible in extreme circumstances that this could result in dismissal or legal action, but only in cases of serious violation – and only following appropriate investigative and disciplinary processes.

Responding to sensitive issues on social media

Social media can often be a 'news breaker' for stories in relation to our work - both good and bad. Sometimes these issues can be extremely sensitive, so it is important that we manage them as carefully as possible.

We seek to avoid amplifying sensitive issues by:

- Assessing whether a response is absolutely necessary. Unless a direct question is posed to a WWF account on twitter, or in a comment thread on any of WWF's social media channels, the default policy is not to respond and raise with news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org
- Responding in a limited and strategic way - often taking the discussion off social media by directing to a relevant policy position on our website
- Only responding to posts where WWF has been directly mentioned or @WWF tagged
• Avoiding confrontation or debate
• Taking the sensitive issue off social as soon as possible

Responses will be considered in the following instances:

• When the question has been asked by a person or organisation that gives some indication of being thoughtful or reasonable on the topic
• When we feel more damage may be done through silence than response (i.e. someone or a group of people start to highlight that we’re not responding on tricky topics whilst actively still engaging in others)
• Where we have something useful to contribute to the discussion
• Where we would not come across as overly defensive
• When there is not a risk of undermining network policy or protocol

Responses won’t be considered:

• Where an account is anonymous or pseudo-anonymous
• Where an account appears to represent hard line views with no indication of reasonableness
• Instances of spam or trolling
• Where we are likely to add fuel to a fire, which is likely to have a more detrimental impact for the organisation than silence

Responses should:

• Be as personal as we’re able to frame a response without losing our WWF voice
• Be respectful and not confrontational
• Be informative, not defensive
• Be carefully formulated so they cannot be used out of context in a negative manner
• Wherever possible take the debate off social media and onto a web page with more information (ideally this would be hosted within panda.org to maximise positive SEO impact for ‘our side of the story’)

Please do not respond to a sensitive social media issue until you have received an agreed response and approach from news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org

If you notice a sensitive issue in social media that you believe we are not aware of, please flag this to news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org

If you are aware of an issue that could affect the reputation of the organisation, then you should alert news@wwfint.org immediately.

Hiding comments on Facebook:
As an organisation we are able to ‘hide’ user comments on our Facebook posts – this still means the user who made the comment and their friends can see it, but not anybody else. Hiding comments can be an effective way of closing down difficult or unwelcome comment thread, but should only occur after full consideration of the options to the response (see above). If in doubt, please check with digital@wwfint.org

**Do hide comments if:**

The comment contravenes our Comments Policy on our FB page. If it:

- is obscene or disrespectful
- is irrelevant to the aims of the WWF community
- is irrelevant to the original post (such as a comment on trophy hunting on a plastics campaign post)
- is judged to be spam
- is abusive or threatening to the WWF community or individuals within it
- distributes false and/or misleading information
- advertises or promotes products and/or services
- repeats previous posts.

**Do not hide comments if:**

- We simply disagree with it – we encourage free expression and debate, so as long as it is factual and respectful we should keep it unhidden.

**Blocking / muting accounts on Twitter**

- We do not support blocking or muting accounts on Twitter. As an organisation we are committed to being open and able to listen to criticism from others. If you think an account is acting in a way that goes against our community engagement guidelines, please reach out to news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org for guidance.

**Community engagement guidelines**

The following message appears on the ‘about’ section of Facebook and YouTube and can be requested by people who join our community by following us on our various social media accounts.
Thank you for joining the WWF community. Please read these guidelines designed to keep our followers and friends safe online.

WWF is responsible for protecting and maintaining the integrity of this community. While we actively encourage this community to get involved by posting, commenting and taking part in discussions, we do have some basic rules.

WWF will remove content if it:

• is obscene or disrespectful
• is irrelevant to the aims of the WWF community
• is irrelevant to the original post
• is judged to be spam
• is abusive or threatening to the WWF community or individuals within it
• distributes false and/or misleading information
• advertises or promotes products and/or services
• repeats previous posts.

**Personal accounts**

Social media is an important part of how many of us communicate, advocate, and network. At WWF we want to encourage its use among staff – people should feel free to share the amazing work WWF does and their involvement in it.

However, when talking publicly about the issues WWF works on, it’s important to be aware of the grey area between our professional and personal lives.

**When stating that you work for WWF on your bio**

Although it is recommended, and common practice, to include a statement in your profile ‘that all views are your own and not of the organisation’s, the reality is that once your association with WWF has been publicly mentioned anywhere on the Internet, you are responsible for anything that you say which could bring your role or the organisation into disrepute.

So it is important to understand that **this statement does not act as a legal disclaimer.**

**Commenting on sensitive issues**

When controversial and emotive stories break – like trophy hunting or human rights abuse allegations – people may often feel the need to comment and express opinion. We want our staff to feel they have the freedom to post on things they feel strongly about, but, as a WWF employee we ask that you refrain from doing so in a way that could be considered
contradictory to WWF stated positions. If in any doubt, please refrain from posting and check with news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org for guidance.

At present, WWF and all our staff are under increased scrutiny, from media and stakeholders, following recent allegations. As such, we request all staff to be thoughtful when posting any content related to indigenous communities, protected areas, wildlife crime and law enforcement.

Also, please kindly note that currently, WWF staff and official handles may also be subject to trolling from organizations like Survival International, RFUK and BuzzFeed. We request you to kindly refrain from engaging with any such comment or tweet to avoid giving it greater attention/impressions and please do reach out to news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org should you have any queries.

**Communicating about your work at WWF**

Remember - if your Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn or Facebook (or other social media platform) post mentions an area we are seen to be working on, or are associated with (even if you don’t directly mention WWF), that comment may be linked back to the organisation. This is especially true if you mention WWF in your bio as you will be seen as a spokesperson. It is equally true if you comment on discussion forums, website comment threads, or online user groups.

Whilst approved WWF spokespeople should feel they have a higher degree of scope to talk about the specifics of their expertise on social media, equally they hold a greater degree of responsibility for what they post and comment on. If you are an approved WWF spokesperson, please contact news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org if you have any questions.

Unless you are an approved expert spokesperson for WWF, please avoid discussing sensitive issues or sharing controversial content which has not already been published by the organisation on the WWF website, blog or social media channels.

The following guidance should be adhered to by all staff:

- Do not replicate or publish any internal or private conversation that have been held within WWF – unless express permission has been given
- If you receive any direct approaches about your work with WWF then please ensure you research who has asked the question. Be aware of trolls and anyone that might be looking to draw out inappropriate information to be shared publicly. Look carefully also for approaches directly from journalists on an issue. Direct contact with any journalists or media should first be agreed with the media team as these will be taken as public facing organisational quotes. If in any doubt, please raise with news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org
- Be aware that there may be occasions where the query is best responded to through a WWF corporate channel
- Feedback you receive on any posted or tweeted WWF content would be warmly received by the digital team.

Images:

- Make sure any image you share has the correct photo credit
- Copyright on images is extremely important and photographers and members of the public do notice when something is used without permission – and could sue
- You may like and share WWF’s posts (in fact we’d be delighted!) or retweet (RT)
- You may not ‘copy out’ photos from WWF to posts and re-use on your own Facebook or Twitter accounts.
- You may not source images from the HIVE to post on your own Facebook posts or tweets (unless permission is given by the International digital team)
- Images shared on our WWF accounts from events with public or supporters will need photo release forms signed by anyone featured in the images
- Imagery of children should not be used without the express consent of the schools and youth team. See below for safeguarding guidelines.

Use of the panda logo:

Any use of the panda logo in profile pictures or background images within a social platform must be approved by WWF. Please contact digital@wwfint.org for more information. The use of the logo and WWF and/or WWF to sell or promote products is strictly prohibited without prior consent.

Facebook privacy settings:

The International digital team would always recommend setting your privacy settings so that only friends can see your updates – this way you can add another layer of protection with regards to phishing scams.

Invite-only social media accounts:

It is possible to set your Instagram, Facebook or Twitter account to ‘private view’, so only those you give permission to can view your posts. Whilst this is an added layer of protection, WWF do not see this as a full privacy option, and users should still assume that posts can shared outside of your personal contacts. We therefore request users still follow the above policies on their personal accounts.

Summary of personal account use:

Do
Share official WWF posts (as much as you like, please!)
Share content that WWF has already published elsewhere
Post stories about your involvement in our amazing work
Check in with news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org if in doubt about controversial/sensitive issue you may wish to talk about on social media
Assume that the Social Media policy applies to discussion boards, forums and chat groups, just as much as Linkedin, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.
Contact news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org if you are approached by a journalist for comment on social media
Read the WWF safeguarding guidelines about the use of images of children (below)
Seek consent via news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org for use of the panda logo on personal channels
Apply common sense! If it feels like the wrong thing to publish, check in with news@wwfint.org and digital@wwfint.org first.

Don’t

Assume a disclaimer in your social media profile separates your association with WWF
Assume that not mentioning you work WWF is enough – if you can find your association with WWF on Google, so can anybody else
Assume ‘Private View’ settings mean the WWF Social Media Policy does not apply. It does.
Share controversial/sensitive content which has not already been published by WWF.
Share private or internal conversations held with other WWF staff
‘Copy out’ images from WWF posts and share on your channels
Source images from the HIVE to use on your personal channels

Child protection and safeguarding

Images of children taken for business purposes and where their faces are clearly shown can never be posted on any social networking site without the express permission of the child’s parent or legal guardian, evidenced through a signed model release form. Such images should only ever be uploaded onto reputable sites.
WWF staff or representatives should not capture or post any other child related materials onto any social networking site that might damage the reputation of WWF. To do so will be considered as gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal.
WWF representatives must not accept any friend requests from young people engaged with WWF under any circumstances. Parents are asked to inform WWF immediately if it
appears that a WWF representative has accepted a friend request as it may be someone pretending to be associated with WWF.

- WWF representatives who have contact with young people on WWF business should ensure their social networking business activity is done from a WWF business related account and not their own personal channels.