



Learning for Life and Exploring Website and Social Media Guidelines

Local Office Website Guidelines

As long as they observe the Rules and Regulations of Learning for Life, local offices are free to develop their own applications of Internet and Web technology. Over time, many local offices will decide to publish under the National BSA Council umbrella for hosting, content, and technical support. For more information, please feel free to contact the BSA National Council social media team at social.media@scouting.org for further guidance. For those that continue to publish independently, we have set up guidelines to help local offices build the Exploring brand and protect employees, volunteers, and participants.

While local offices may establish their own policies concerning their use of the Internet, the National Learning for Life Service Center will only recognize as "official" those sites that have followed the numbered guidelines below. The National Learning for Life Service Center will not acknowledge or provide links to any local office site that does not meet these guidelines. The guidelines may be altered or amended to provide updated information, and local offices will be notified when that happens.

1. Local office web sites must be hosted off-site at a hosting facility and may not be connected in any way to the local office's internal network.
2. The local office must have direct control over the content of its official Web site.
3. The content of the local office site must be appropriate to the Learning for Life and/or Exploring program.
4. The local office site cannot contain links to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Learning for Life and Exploring programs.
5. The local office site cannot contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
6. The local office site cannot engage in the electronic sale of LFL Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
7. The local office site cannot replicate any LFL publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
8. Local office sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the Internet.
9. Local office sites must consider the safety and privacy of their participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual.

Post/Club/Group Website Guidelines

We've long recognized that Post/Club sites created by individuals at the Post/Club level of Exploring and LFL Groups are essentially personal, and therefore beyond the National Local office's control or liability. We do offer advisory guidelines to those who publish Exploring/LFL-related sites on their own responsibility, and we urge local offices to take the same approach. These guidelines are established to help avoid several common mistakes.

Protection of personal information pertaining to our youth participants and volunteers should be our greatest concern. This organization has used COPPA, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, as its standard in this area. You can read the details on compliance at <http://www.coppa.org/comply.htm>. It would be a good practice to share them with Post/Club-level publishers in your local office.

Updated: 7-6-2015

A second concern about individual Post/Club sites is **copyright infringement**. Sadly, photos, music, and video are commonly reused on the Web without permission. Plagiarism is also common. Such practices violate the ethics of Exploring. They are also violations of law, and could expose the publishers legally.

Our third concern is **commercialism**. We don't allow ads on local office sites. We recognize that "free" Web services often used to create Post/Club-level sites may contain advertising. This practice may reflect poorly on the Exploring brand, and should be avoided. A more serious concern would be sites that engage in any fund-raising activities not previously approved by their local office.

Any independent sales, solicitation, OR collection of donations is prohibited by our bylaws and annual agreements.

1. The content of the Post/Club site must be appropriate to the Exploring program.
2. The Post/Club site cannot link to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Exploring program.
3. The Post/Club site should not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
4. The Post/Club site cannot engage in the electronic sale of LFL Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
5. The Post/Club site cannot replicate any LFL publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
6. Post/Club sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the Internet.
7. Post/Club sites must consider the safety and privacy of their participants and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual.
Post/Club sites cannot engage in fund-raising except as directly approved by, and under the supervision of, the local office.

Social Media Guidelines

[Note: It is not the goal of this document to provide a step-by-step "how to" on creating and using the specific features of social media channels. Such guides already exist and can be found elsewhere. Additionally, social media changes regularly, so this document reflects the current guidelines as determined by the LFL and is subject to modifications and amendments from time to time as required.]

INTRODUCTION

It's an exciting time to be part of Learning for Life and Exploring for many reasons. One of those is that new communication vehicles now enable current and past Explorers, as well those who are interested in participating or are just interested in Exploring in general, to communicate directly with each other about Exploring. Online social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made it possible for virtually anyone with an Internet connection to create and be part of online Post/Clubs where people can discuss Exploring and share stories, photos, videos, and other types of media. Although using social media is not an Exploring activity, their use to connect with others interested in Exploring can be a very positive experience. But the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility. For that reason, the Learning for Life has developed the following guidelines to help you navigate the use of social media channels. These guidelines are a complement to the LFL's existing Youth Protection policies and training.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH PROTECTION

First, everyone should review and strictly adhere to the terms of service and existing guidelines outlined by each individual social media channel (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.). As is true for participation in Learning for Life program activities, all Explorers, Participants and adult leaders should abide by the guidelines outlined in the

Updated: 7-6-2015

Learning for Life's guiding principles when participating in social networking. As with a Learning for Life program activity, safety and Youth Protection should be a key focus. Staying true to the commitment of the LFL to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off, should always be at the forefront of any considerations where social media usage is concerned. To help ensure that all communication on social media channels remains positive and safe, these channels must be public, and all communication on or through them must be public. This enables administrators to monitor all communication and help ensure there is no inappropriate communication between adult leaders and Explorers/Participants or between Explorers/Participants themselves. Therefore, no private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invite-only YouTube channels) are acceptable in helping to administer the Learning for Life programs. Private channels and private communication put both the youth and you at risk. If you feel the information you seek to share via social media channels should not be shared in public, you should not share that information via social media.

Abiding by the "two deep" leadership policy that governs all Learning for Life activities also applies to use of social media. Two-deep leadership means two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Explorer/Participant or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips and activities.

As it relates to social media, two-deep leadership means there should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging (Google Messenger, AIM, etc.), or other similar messaging features provided through social media sites. All communication between adults and youth should take place in a public forum (e.g. the Facebook wall), or at a bare minimum, electronic communication between adults and youth should always include one or more authorized adults openly "copied" (included) on the message or message thread.

While all communication should be public and leaders should follow the two-deep rule while communicating via social media channels, it is recommended that as you and members of your group create personal social media profiles, the personal information on these profiles should be kept private (e.g., do not display your phone number, address, or personal email address on these profiles). It is recommended that any Explorers/Participants with personal profiles for social media make those profiles private so the Explorer's/Participant's personal information is not accessible by the public. In creating personal profiles, everyone should familiarize themselves with and abide by the terms of service of the sites where they create and maintain personal profiles.

INTERNET SAFETY GUIDELINES

Any Exploring Post/Clubs and LFL Groups that plan to use social media should share the following Internet safety guidelines with Explorers, Participants, parents, leaders, should abide by the following Internet safety guidelines and personal protection rules:

- Keep online conversations with everyone in public places, not in email.
- Do not give anyone online your real last name, phone numbers at home or school, your parents' workplaces, or the name or location of your school or home address unless you have your parents' permission first. Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other adult in your family.
- If someone sends or shows you email or any type of direct message/wall post with sayings that make you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts. You are probably right to be wary. Do not respond. Tell a parent or trusted adult what happened.
- If somebody tells you to keep what's going on between the two of you secret, tell a parent or guardian.

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- Be careful to whom you talk. Anyone who starts talking about subjects that make you feel uncomfortable is probably an adult posing as a kid.
- Pay attention if someone tells you things that don't fit together. If one time an online "friend" says he or she is 12, and another time says he or she is 14. That is a warning that this person is lying and may be an adult posing as a kid.
- Unless you talk to a parent about it first, never talk to anybody by phone if you know that person only online. If someone asks you to call—even if it's collect or a toll-free, 800 number—that's a warning. That person can get your phone number this way, either from a phone bill or from caller ID.
- Never agree to meet someone you have met only online at any place off-line, in the real world.
- Watch out if someone online starts talking about hacking, or breaking into other people's or companies' computer systems; phreaking (the "ph" sounds like an "f"), the illegal use of long-distance services or cellular phones; or viruses (online programs that destroy or damage data when other people download these onto their computers).
- Promise your parent or an adult family member and yourself that you will honor any rules about how much time you are allowed to spend online and what you do and where you go while you are online.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

For practical considerations, LFL expects adults intending to use social media on behalf of Learning for Life programs, should follow the below considerations:

- Social media must be monitored. A qualified staff member or volunteer should have the responsibility of monitoring social media channels daily, and backup administrators/monitors should be designated so there is no gap in the monitoring.
- Integrate your communications. Create a strategy to surround your intended audience with your key message(s) through print, the Web, email, radio, TV, word of mouth, and social media.
- Talk to your audiences and let them talk to and about you. By posting content on a consistent schedule, you can tell your story and encourage conversations in the Post/Club/Group.
- Social media takes a thick skin. Negative conversations are happening already, but now you have a voice in the conversation. Don't delete negative comments unless they violate the terms laid out in the LFL Social Media Digital Contract.
- Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts if response is warranted. Some negative comments do not require a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should temper if and how you respond.
- Direct media inquiries to the appropriate person. Media inquiries coming through social media should be referred to the LFL executive or a designee for an official response.
- When disagreeing with others' opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Ask your LFL executive or the designee for advice on how to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on Exploring program.
- Build trust by being open and transparent. Share information and what the challenges and opportunities are in your Post/Club/Group.

KEY SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE

There are many social media channels available to users, and new channels are being introduced frequently. As such, it would be impossible to provide information on all of them. We will focus on three of the most popular and most applicable to Exploring. Those channels are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Facebook

Facebook is a wonderful way to form online Post/Club/Group pages so that people can gather to have conversations and share information. Indeed, the LFL National Service Center as well as many local offices and even some Posts/Clubs/Groups are already using Facebook to communicate about Exploring. Of course, creating

Updated: 7-6-2015

and maintaining a Facebook page for your local office or Post/Club/Group is a big responsibility and should not be entered into lightly.

It may be valuable to think of a Facebook page as a little like a troop meeting that is always open, always going on, and where members of the public may drop by and watch or participate at any time of day or night. That means Explorers/Participants can be even more involved in sharing the fun and excitement of LFL programs and be a more active part of the group discussion—even when they're at home. But it's also easy to see how, if left unstructured or unattended by LFL leaders, this never-ending meeting could easily become a problem.

When considering whether or not Facebook might be a good option for your local office or Post/Club/Group, it is important to remember that Facebook requires all users to be at least 13 years of age. Before creating a Facebook page, you should educate yourself about what Facebook is and how it is used, and familiarize yourself with its terms of service. This will help you navigate carefully in your development of a fan page.

When creating a Facebook page, you should make it a public fan page. In addition, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the LFL. At least one of these page administrators should be a LFL employee, a local office employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training. All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the use of the messaging capabilities of Facebook.

Perhaps the biggest strength of Facebook is also its biggest weakness: Facebook fan pages are open to the public, which means any information shared on that fan page can be viewed by essentially anyone. As such, you should make sure that any information shared on that page by you or by your fans is information that is appropriate to share with the public. This is especially true regarding the level of detail you provide regarding Explorers and their activities.

For the Info Tab of your Facebook page, you should use the guidelines set forth on the National Exploring Facebook page Info Tab in its Digital Contract, found here:

https://www.facebook.com/lflexploring/info?tab=page_info

Once you have created a Facebook fan page, invited people to “like” your page and started gathering “fans,” it is important for you to post good and appropriate content and monitor the content that is posted to your wall. Unfortunately, not all the content posted to the wall by your fans may be appropriate. All content posted by you or by fans on the Facebook wall should conform to the precepts of the LFL Guiding Principles. Content that does not meet that standard should be removed immediately. If a user posts highly offensive content, the content should be removed immediately, and you may need to block or ban the user who posted it. Such an action should not be used liberally but only when content is truly objectionable.

This type of careful monitoring requires vigilance. Before creating a Facebook page, you should consider whether you or someone else who will administer the page will be able to monitor that page and post content consistently to help ensure that only appropriate content is posted. Pages with inconsistent and infrequent updates can cause your fans to become disinterested, and your page can become a target for spammers or other predatory parties who recognize that you appear not to be actively involved on your page.

As with any online site, it is highly important that you do not give out personal information about Explorers or Participants to anyone on Facebook. Every effort should be made to help ensure that your fans and those Explorers that use the Facebook page are protected. Keeping Explorers/Participants safe and keeping their private information safe should be the primary concern in any endeavor involving them—whether that's keeping them safe on a camping trip or keeping them safe on the Post/Club/Group Facebook fan page.

Twitter

Because of its 140-character-per-post limit and relative lack of multimedia capabilities, Twitter is designed for quick, simple updates and also can be used like instant messaging or email to have conversations with one or more

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people in a mostly public forum. Twitter can be a great place to share quick observations, provide updates about programs, share training deadlines, link to other websites with event details, share great LFL program stories, and have an informal conversation with followers. In general, Twitter has a more personal voice, meaning posts on Twitter are expected to be relatively informal and friendly. It is also important to remember that Twitter is a public forum and is viewable by virtually anyone. That means content placed on Twitter should be acceptable to your specific intended audience of followers as well as a wider audience.

Some direct-messaging capabilities exist with Twitter; however, adults should not use these direct-messaging capabilities when dealing with Explorers and Participants. All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the messaging capabilities of Twitter. Before starting a Twitter account for your local office or Post/Club/Group, familiarize yourself with Twitter's terms of service and adhere to those guidelines.

When creating a Twitter account for your Post/Club/Group or local office, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the LFL. At least one of these page administrators should be a LFL employee, a local office employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training.

In addition, all content posted on your Twitter account should be in line with the Learning for Life Guiding Principles. That includes never "tweeting" (posting) content that is un-LFL-like or responding to a tweet in a un-LFL-like manner to anyone interacting with you through your Twitter account. Twitter should be updated regularly and watched closely so responses can be provided to people requesting information or trying to start a conversation.

YouTube

YouTube is primarily a video-hosting and -viewing platform. It lets you upload videos to a channel you manage. Once on your YouTube channel, each video has an individual URL and can be viewed on YouTube or shared as a link or embedded (by you, your fans, and members of the public) via other social media outlets and on websites. Before starting a YouTube channel for your local office or Post/Club/Group, familiarize yourself with the site's terms of service and adhere to those guidelines. When creating a YouTube channel, your channel must be public. There should be no private groups. In addition, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the LFL. At least one of these page administrators should be a LFL employee, a local office employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training. Like the other social media channels, the public at large has access to your videos and may view and comment on them unless you set viewing restrictions in your settings. If you enable comments, you should monitor those comments regularly to be sure they are appropriate. YouTube also has messaging features (similar to email). All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the messaging capabilities of YouTube.

Having a YouTube channel is a great way to share videos of events, how-to videos, awards ceremony videos, and other videos that would be good to share with members of the group as well as the public.

An important consideration for YouTube or any similar site that features videos and/or images of Explorers/Participants is that all videos/images should adhere to recommended Youth Protection policies and should protect the privacy of individual Explorers/Participants. Additionally, all videos should show Explorers/Participants and leaders following designated appropriate guidelines and wearing proper attire for whatever activity is being undertaken in the video. All safety and Youth Protection policies must be followed for any LFL program activities, including those being captured on video.

Final Thoughts

It is important to remember that all social media channels are, by nature, designed to be social, that is, shared with members of the public. As such, whatever social media activities you engage in should be completed with the understanding that the public will see them and may engage in an online dialogue with you as a result. You should not do anything on a social media channel that reflects poorly on you, other individuals in your local office or

Updated: 7-6-2015

Post/Club, the Learning for Life, or anyone else. Before posting any content on any social media channel, you should first ask yourself if that content is in keeping with the precepts of the LFL and Exploring mission.

As an additional consideration, once created, social media channels and the content on them “live forever” on the Internet, sometimes even if the accounts have been deleted. That means social media channels created today may still exist five, 10, or 15 years from now, in some cases long after those who started them are no longer involved directly with Exploring. As such, considerations should be made regarding the transitioning of administration rights and duties if and when the initial administrators end their direct involvement in LFL programs.

Also, organizations wishing to use social media must accept the fact that listening is just as important as speaking in these channels, and those wishing to participate in this space should be prepared to listen if they are to reap any value.

Social media can be a powerful tool for sharing the joys and triumphs of Learning for Life, but if not executed properly, it can be a detriment to everything LFL represents. As such, engage in social media activities wisely. Also realize that social media is a new and evolving form of communication that requires flexibility, patience, and commitment, but the rewards of increased connection with, and understanding of, your target audience can be great.

In your social media communications, you should be clear that it is not an official LFL social media channel but is instead your own personal channel. You can use the following template as an example:

“This site is the personal [reference your specific social media channel] of [your name or organization] and is reflective only of my personal views, thoughts, and opinions. This site does not have the endorsement of the Learning for Life, and it is not an official communication channel of the Learning for Life.”

Should you have questions regarding any of the guidelines and/or recommendations or concerning the use of a specific social media channel not covered here, please feel free to contact the LFL National Service Center at exploring@lflmail.org for further guidance.

FOLLOW US

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lflexploring>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/learningforlifeusa>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/learningfor0419/>