**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS**

INTRODUCTION

Canine Partners encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to set out what Canine Partners expects from all registered volunteers’ when using social media.

A volunteer is someone who spends time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit Canine Partners. This includes, but is not limited to: Puppy parents, demonstration dog handlers, foster parents, brood bitch holders, speakers, office volunteers, fundraising volunteers and local community group members.

**It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for the charity, and that social media is never private.**

This policy is solely for volunteers of Canine Partners and aims to:

* Give clear guidelines on what volunteers can and can’t say about the organisation on social media.
* Comply with relevant legislation to protect volunteers.
* Help all volunteers to draw a line between their private lives and their volunteering duties.
* Protect Canine Partners against liability for the actions of volunteers.
* Be clear about sensitive issues such as monitoring and explaining how problems with inappropriate use of social media will be addressed.

1. Policy statement Canine Partners have internal controls that are appropriate and proportionate for our charity's needs and are clear to everyone involved with the charity using social media  
   1. Canine Partners recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our work using a wide variety of social media, including but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and blogs. This policy aims to protect partners and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgement, and use common sense. (See 2.1)
   2. Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information and reputation and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of work time and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect volunteers to adhere to this policy.

2. Who is covered by the Policy?

2.1 This policy covers volunteers of Canine Partners and their relatives.

3. Scope and purpose of the Policy

3.1 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including but not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and all other social networking sites and internet postings including blogs.

3.2 It applies to the use of social media both for volunteering and personal purposes, whether while volunteering or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to volunteers (i.e. mobile devices and during personal time).

3.3 This policy links to all other policies therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equal opportunities, data protection, privacy etc.

4. Personnel responsible for implementing the Policy

4.1 The Marketing and Communications Team are responsible for the overall boundaries of this policy as a communications channel, but those responsible for volunteers must ensure their teams understand the standards of behaviour and conduct and the procedure we follow when actions and behaviour do not follow our values.

4.2 All volunteers are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or any questions about this policy should be directed to the Marketing and Communications Team on [socialmedia@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:socialmedia@caninepartners.org.uk).

4.3 Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the Director of Operations in line with the reporting procedures outlined in the Canine Partners Safeguarding Policy.

5. Guidelines for responsible use of social media

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

5.1 We want you to help protect our business reputation. Volunteers must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about the following groups, regardless of if they have a past, present or future association with Canine Partners:

a) The organisation.

b) Canine Partners staff, our volunteers, partners, dogs, members or applicants.

c) Suppliers and vendors.

d) other affiliates and stakeholders.

Volunteers should avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our business reputation, even indirectly.

5.2 Volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media, whether as part of their role at Canine Partners or on personal social media accounts.

Remember that what you publish might be available to read by the masses including Canine Partners colleagues, volunteers, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time.

**There is still risk of this if you post and then delete the post shortly after. Keep this in mind before you post content.**

5.3 Canine Partners does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults, anyone under the age of 18, members of staff, volunteers, partners, applicants or anyone associated with the individual in any images or posts on social media without their expressed permission, or their guardian's expressed permission.

5.4 Volunteers are not permitted to set up social media accounts for Canine Partners, including Facebook pages and groups without prior consent from the Marketing and Communications Team. Any social media pages you set up must not include Canine Partners in the title or appear to be affiliated with Canine Partners. Facebook groups must be closed or secret groups and should not appear as public.

5.5 If you disclose your affiliation as a volunteer of Canine Partners, you must also state that your views do not represent those of the organisation you are working or volunteering for. For example, you could state in your Twitter biography “My own views do not represent the views of Canine Partners”. You should also ensure that your profile and any content that you post are consistent with the image you present to those you work with as part of your role.

5.6 You are personally responsible for the security settings of any social media sites that you use and should ensure that they are set to the appropriate level if you wish to limit who can see your information.

5.7 Remember that you must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. You must be mindful of data protection and privacy issues. If in doubt, speak to the Marketing and Communications Team about your intentions. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information and photographs held on our supporters, staff, volunteers, partners and applicants.

5.8 Avoid posting comments about sensitive Canine Partners related topics, such as our performance and policies. Even if you make it clear that your views are not reflective of the charity’s, your comments could still damage our reputation.

5.9 If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with the Marketing and Communications Team.

5.10 If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on Canine Partners or our stakeholders, you should report it to the Marketing and Communications Team. All staff and volunteers should be responsible for protecting our reputation.

5.11 The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your employment or volunteering are regarded as our confidential information, and as such you will be required to delete all such details from your personal social networking accounts, should you finish working or volunteering with Canine Partners.

5.12 Contact details and photographs of partners, staff and volunteers are subject to data protection. Partners are not permitted to access or store information on anyone that would breach data protection.

5.13 The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your volunteering are regarded as our confidential information, and as such you will be required to delete all such details from your personal social networking accounts, should you finish volunteering with Canine Partners.

5.14 Any affiliation (Including, but not limited to: adverts, affiliate links and sponsored posts) with a commercial organisation must be approved by Canine Partners before you commit to the opportunity. You must alert the Marketing and Communications Team to any commercial opportunities at least one week prior to permission being needed.

5.15 Please refer to the social media guidelines for further detail on posting on social media.

6. Personal use of social media in the office environment

We recognise volunteers may occasionally desire to use social media for personal activities in the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. We authorise such occasional use during rest breaks so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your role.

**You should not use Canine Partners IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to keep private or confidential.**

If using social media during volunteering time, circulating chain letters or other spam is strictly prohibited. Circulating or posting commercial, persona, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to Canine Partners work is also not permitted.

7. Breach of policy

If a volunteer is found to be in breach of this policy, dependant of circumstances and contravention, the following actions may happen:

6.1 Management will address a breach of this policy with you.

6.2 Volunteers may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy.

**Disclaimer**

Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However, it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith, without accepting liability.

Please sign below to confirm you have read and understood the terms of this document. Once signed, please return to the Volunteering Manager at [volunteer@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@caninepartners.org.uk)

Signature …………………………

Name ……………………………..

Date ……………………………..

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