

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY HANDBOOK

[Museum Name]

Version 1.0 | DD.MM.YYYY

A comprehensive guide for staff, volunteers, and stakeholders

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

1.1 Purpose

This policy establishes the framework for all social media activities undertaken by or on behalf of [Museum Name]. It ensures our digital communications:

- **Protect** the Museum's reputation and legal standing
- **Engage** audiences authentically and inclusively
- **Comply** with UK legislation and sector best practice
- **Empower** staff to communicate confidently within clear boundaries

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

Who	What
All employees (permanent, fixed-term, casual)	Official Museum social media accounts
Volunteers and interns	Personal accounts when representing or discussing the Museum
Trustees and Board members	Third-party platforms used for Museum purposes
Contractors and agency staff	Emerging platforms and technologies (including AI tools)
Partner organisations posting on our behalf	Comments, direct messages, and community management

1.3 Definitions

- **Social media:** Any online platform enabling user-generated content and interaction, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, Threads, and emerging platforms
- **Official account:** Any account operated in the Museum's name or on its behalf
- **Content:** Text, images, video, audio, links, comments, direct messages, stories, reels, and live broadcasts

1.4 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or following:

- Significant platform changes
- Legal or regulatory updates

- A serious incident or complaint
- Organisational restructure

Policy Owner: Head of Communications

Last Review: [Date]

Next Review: [Date + 12 months]

SECTION 2: LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Overview

Social media use is governed by multiple UK laws. Ignorance is not a defence. All staff must understand these obligations.

2.2 UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & Data Protection Act 2018

Key Requirements

Principle	Application to Social Media
Lawfulness, fairness, transparency	Clearly explain how you use visitor data; never collect information covertly
Purpose limitation	Data collected for competitions cannot be used for unrelated marketing without consent
Data minimisation	Only request necessary information (e.g., don't ask for addresses when email suffices)
Accuracy	Correct or delete inaccurate personal data promptly
Storage limitation	Delete personal data when no longer needed; set retention schedules
Integrity and confidentiality	Use strong passwords, two-factor authentication; never share login credentials insecurely

Practical Obligations

- **Photographs and video:** Obtain explicit consent before posting identifiable images. For children under 13, parental/guardian consent is mandatory.

- **Direct messages:** Treat DMs containing personal data as you would email: securely, with appropriate retention.
- **Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs):** Individuals may request copies of their personal data. Respond within one calendar month. Escalate to the Data Protection Officer immediately.
- **Breach reporting:** Any suspected data breach (e.g., account hack exposing DMs) must be reported to the DPO within 24 hours. Serious breaches require ICO notification within 72 hours.

Template: Photo Consent Statement (Events)

"[Museum Name] may take photographs and video at this event for use on our website and social media channels. If you do not wish to be photographed, please inform a member of staff. For further information, see our Privacy Policy at [URL]."

2.3 Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI)

Public sector museums (local authority, national, university-affiliated) are subject to FOI.

What this means for social media:

- Social media content and DMs may be disclosable under FOI
- Retain records in accordance with the Museum's retention schedule
- Never delete content to avoid disclosure, this is a criminal offence

Exemptions may apply to:

- Personal data (s.40)
- Information provided in confidence (s.41)
- Commercial interests (s.43)

Action: All FOI requests must be forwarded to [FOI Officer/designated contact] immediately.

2.4 Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

The Basics

You CAN	You CANNOT
Share content you created	Post others' images/text without permission
Use properly licensed stock images	Assume "found on Google" means free to use

Embed YouTube videos (the platform permits this)	Download and re-upload others' videos
Quote short extracts for criticism/review (fair dealing)	Reproduce entire articles or lengthy passages
Share user-generated content with explicit permission	Assume tagging/@ mentioning grants permission

Orphan Works

If the copyright holder cannot be identified after diligent search, you may apply for a licence from the IPO. Do not assume you can use the work without this.

User-Generated Content (UGC)

Before reposting visitor photos or videos:

1. Request explicit permission via comment or DM
2. Credit the creator prominently
3. Keep records of permissions granted

Template: UGC Permission Request

"Hi [Name], we love this photo! Would you be happy for us to share it on our official channels? We'll credit you, of course. Just reply 'yes' if that's okay!"

2.5 Defamation Act 2013

Defamation occurs when a published statement causes serious harm to reputation.

Staff Obligations

- **Never** post unverified claims about individuals or organisations
- **Never** accuse individuals of crimes, incompetence, or unethical behaviour without incontrovertible evidence
- **Remember:** Reposting/retweeting defamatory content can make the Museum liable

Safe Practices

- State opinions clearly as opinions: *"In our view..."* or *"We believe..."*
- Stick to verifiable facts
- If in doubt, don't post—seek advice from the Communications Manager

2.6 Equality Act 2010

All social media content must be free from discrimination on grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Inclusive Content Checklist

- Does imagery represent diverse communities where possible?
- Is language gender-neutral where appropriate?
- Have we considered cultural sensitivities?
- Is content accessible (see Section 11)?

2.7 Online Safety Act 2023

The Online Safety Act places new duties on platforms, but museums should be aware of:

- **Illegal content:** Do not post or tolerate content that is illegal (e.g., terrorism, CSAM, harassment)
- **Children's safety:** Take extra care with content aimed at or likely to be seen by under-18s
- **Transparency:** Clearly explain moderation policies (see Section 7)

2.8 Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008

Applies to any commercial messaging, including:

- Ticket promotions
- Shop products
- Paid partnerships and sponsorships

Requirements

- **No misleading claims:** All statements must be accurate and substantiated
- **Disclose paid partnerships:** Use platform tools (#ad, "Paid partnership with...") and ensure disclosures are prominent
- **Influencer relationships:** Written contracts required; compliance with ASA CAP Code

2.9 Summary: Legal Risk Matrix

Risk Area	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Copyright infringement	High	Medium	Mandatory training; approval workflow
Data breach	Medium	High	2FA; access controls; breach protocol
Defamation claim	Low	High	Legal review for sensitive content
FOI non-compliance	Medium	Medium	Retention schedule; staff training
Discrimination complaint	Low	High	Inclusive content checklist; diverse review
Consumer protection breach	Low	Medium	Clear disclosure protocols

SECTION 3: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Organisational Structure

1. Board of Trustees (Ultimate governance responsibility)
2. Museum Director (Policy sign-off; crisis escalation endpoint)
3. Head of Communications/Marketing (Policy owner; strategy; senior approval)
4. Social Media Manager/Officer (Day-to-day management; content creation; community management; analytics)
5. Content Contributors (Curators, learning team, front-of-house providing content ideas, images, specialist knowledge)

3.2 Role Definitions

Board of Trustees

- Approve social media policy
- Receive annual reports on social media performance and incidents
- Provide strategic direction on reputational matters

Museum Director

- Final sign-off on policy
- Crisis escalation endpoint
- Spokesperson for serious incidents

Head of Communications/Marketing

- **Policy owner:** Ensures policy is current, communicated, and enforced
- Approves high-risk content (see Section 5)
- Leads crisis response
- Manages external agency relationships
- Annual reporting to Board

Social Media Manager/Officer

- Day-to-day account management
- Content planning, creation, and scheduling
- Community management and moderation
- First-line crisis response
- Analytics and reporting
- Training delivery
- Maintaining asset library and permissions records

Content Contributors (All Departments)

- Submit content ideas via agreed channels
- Provide accurate information and appropriate imagery
- Flag potential sensitivities
- Respond to specialist queries escalated by Social Media Manager

All Staff

- Comply with this policy
- Report concerns or potential breaches immediately
- Complete mandatory training
- Represent the Museum appropriately on personal accounts (see Section 8)

3.3 Account Access and Security

Account Type	Access Level	Who
Primary accounts (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn)	Full admin	Social Media Manager, Head of Comms
Primary accounts	Editor/scheduler	Designated deputies

YouTube	Manager	Social Media Manager, AV team
TikTok	Full access	Social Media Manager only
Emergency access	Sealed credentials held securely	Director's office

Security Requirements

1. Unique, strong passwords (minimum 16 characters, mixed case, numbers, symbols)
2. Two-factor authentication (2FA) mandatory on all accounts
3. Password manager use required (Museum-approved solution)
4. No shared logins via personal devices without MDM
5. Immediate password change if staff member leaves or moves role
6. Quarterly access audit by IT/Communications

SECTION 4: CONTENT STRATEGY & BRAND VOICE

4.1 Strategic Objectives

Our social media supports the Museum's mission by:

1. Inspiring curiosity about our collections, building, and stories
2. Welcoming diverse audiences, including those who may feel museums "aren't for them"
3. Driving engagement with exhibitions, events, and learning programmes
4. Building community locally, nationally, and internationally
5. Supporting income generation through appropriate promotion
6. Advocating for the value of museums and heritage

4.2 Brand Voice

Attribute	What this means	Example
Knowledgeable	We share expertise without being academic or exclusionary	"This Roman brooch was found just 2 miles from here, imagine who might have worn it"
Welcoming	Warm, inclusive, never condescending	"Never visited? Here's what to expect, and yes, it's free!"
Curious	We ask questions and invite conversation	"What do you think this object was used for?"
Authentic	Honest, transparent, human	"We got this wrong, here's what actually happened"

Playful (where appropriate)	Wit and warmth, never flippant about serious subjects	"Monday mood: this 18th-century portrait that's seen some things"
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Tone Adaptation

Adjust tone to context:

Context	Tone adjustment
Object of the day	Curious, storytelling
Event promotion	Enthusiastic, clear call-to-action
Difficult history	Respectful, measured, factual
Community response	Warm, personal
Crisis/serious issue	Formal, empathetic, factual
Behind the scenes	Playful, human

4.3 Content Pillars

Pillar	% of content	Examples
Collections & stories	40%	Object spotlights, curator insights, conservation, "on this day"
Visit & experience	25%	What's on, opening hours, accessibility info, visitor tips
Community & participation	20%	UGC, questions, polls, local partnerships, volunteer stories
Behind the scenes	10%	Staff profiles, conservation work, exhibition builds
Campaigns & income	5%	Membership, donations, shop, venue hire

4.4 Platform-Specific Guidelines

Facebook

- **Audience:** Broad; skews 35+; strong local community
- **Content:** Event promotion, longer storytelling, community engagement, groups
- **Posting frequency:** 4–7 posts per week
- **Best for:** Local reach, event attendance, older demographics

Instagram

- **Audience:** Visual-first; 25–45; national and international
- **Content:** High-quality imagery, Reels, Stories, carousels
- **Posting frequency:** 5–7 feed posts per week; daily Stories
- **Best for:** Visual storytelling, reaching new audiences, brand building

X (Twitter)

- **Audience:** News-oriented; sector professionals; journalists
- **Content:** Quick updates, threads, sector conversations, real-time engagement
- **Posting frequency:** 1–3 posts per day
- **Best for:** Sector engagement, press, real-time commentary

LinkedIn

- **Audience:** Professional; sector; corporate supporters; job seekers
- **Content:** Organisational news, thought leadership, job vacancies, partnerships
- **Posting frequency:** 2–4 posts per week
- **Best for:** B2B relationships, recruitment, sector positioning

TikTok

- **Audience:** Younger (16–30); discovery-led
- **Content:** Short-form video; trends; humour; behind the scenes
- **Posting frequency:** 3–5 videos per week
- **Best for:** Reaching new/younger audiences; viral potential

YouTube

- **Audience:** All ages; high intent
- **Content:** Longer-form video; exhibition trailers; lectures; documentaries
- **Posting frequency:** As content allows (quality over quantity)
- **Best for:** Evergreen content, SEO, educational reach

SECTION 5: APPROVAL WORKFLOWS

5.1 Content Risk Categories

Category	Definition	Examples	Approval Required
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Green (Standard)	Routine content within established guidelines	Object photos, event reminders, visitor info, UGC reposts	Social Media Manager
Amber (Sensitive)	Content requiring extra consideration	Difficult histories, controversial figures, political adjacency, significant partnerships	Head of Communications
Red (High Risk)	Content with significant reputational, legal, or safety implications	Crisis response, legal matters, safeguarding, major announcements, content involving Royalty or Government	Director (+ legal if needed)

5.2 Standard Approval Workflow (Green Content)

Content created → Social Media Manager reviews → Publish

Turnaround: Same day

5.3 Sensitive Content Workflow (Amber)

Content created → Social Media Manager initial review → Head of communications/marketing approval → Publish

Turnaround: 24–48 hours

Amber Triggers (requires Head of Comms approval)

- Discusses colonialism, slavery, empire, repatriation
- Features human remains
- References ongoing legal cases or inquests
- Involves children (beyond general event photos)
- Partnership with commercial sponsor
- Political figures or current political issues
- Content that could be misinterpreted out of context
- Religious objects or practices
- Death, violence, trauma (even historical)
- Significant factual claims requiring verification

5.4 High-Risk Content Workflow (Red)

Content created → Social Media Manager initial review → Head of communications/marketing approval → Director (+ legal if needed) → Publish

Turnaround: 48–72 hours (or as crisis demands)

Red Triggers (requires Director approval)

- Crisis response or reactive statements
- Matters involving legal proceedings
- Safeguarding concerns
- Data breaches
- Major organisational announcements (redundancies, closures, leadership changes)
- Content involving Royalty, Government ministers, or MPs
- Repatriation of objects
- Response to media enquiries or journalist contact

5.5 Out-of-Hours Protocol

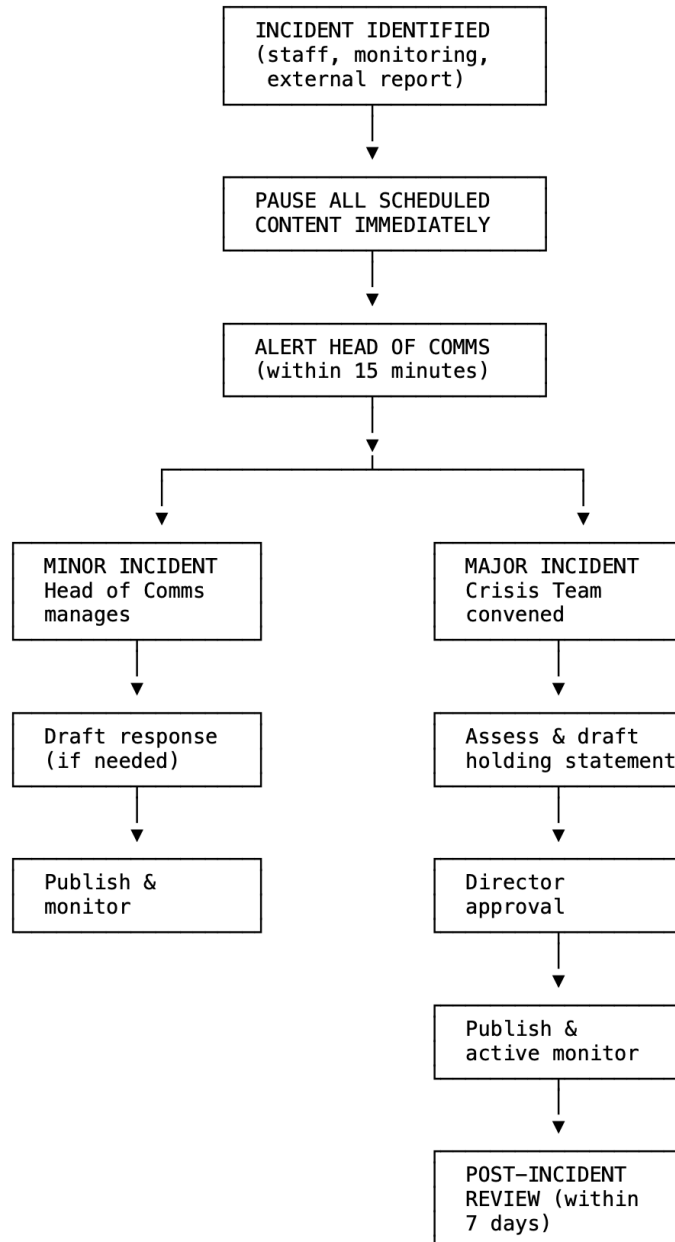
- **Routine content:** Schedule in advance; no out-of-hours posting required
- **Reactive/crisis:** Social Media Manager contacts Head of Comms via mobile. If unavailable, escalate to Director
- **Emergency contact list** maintained securely and updated quarterly

SECTION 6: CRISIS RESPONSE PROTOCOL

6.1 What Constitutes a Crisis?

Category	Examples
Operational	Building emergency, serious accident, unexpected closure
Reputational	Negative press coverage, viral criticism, staff misconduct
Security	Account hack, data breach, impersonation
External	National emergency, terrorism, death of significant figure
Content	Post goes viral for wrong reasons, serious complaint, legal threat

6.2 Crisis Response Flowchart



6.3 Crisis Team Composition

Role	Responsibility
Director	Final decisions, external spokesperson, Board liaison
Head of Communications	Crisis lead, messaging, media
Social Media Manager	Platform management, monitoring, community response

Relevant Department Head	Subject expertise (e.g., Curator for collections issue)
HR Director	Staff-related matters
Data Protection Officer	Data breaches
Legal advisor	As required

6.4 Holding Statements

Pre-approved holding statements for common scenarios:

Account Compromise

"We're aware of unauthorised activity on our [platform] account. We're working to resolve this and secure our account. Please disregard any unusual posts. We'll update you shortly."

Negative Viral Content

"We're aware of concerns about [brief description]. We take this seriously and are looking into it. We'll share more information as soon as we can."

Operational Disruption

"Due to [brief reason], the Museum is currently closed/operating differently. Please check our website for updates. We apologise for any inconvenience."

External Tragedy/National Event

"Our thoughts are with those affected by [event]. We will be pausing our usual social media content."

6.5 Response Principles

1. **Speed matters, but accuracy matters more:** A brief acknowledgment buys time for a fuller response
2. **One voice:** All responses coordinated through Communications
3. **Empathy first:** Lead with human concern, not defensiveness
4. **Transparency:** Admit mistakes where appropriate
5. **No deletion** of posts unless illegal/dangerous—archive and address
6. **Document everything:** Screenshots, timestamps, decisions

6.6 Post-Incident Review

Within 7 days of resolution:

- Timeline of events
- What worked well
- What could improve
- Policy/process changes needed
- Staff support requirements
- Report to Director/Board as appropriate

SECTION 7: COMMUNITY MODERATION & HOUSE RULES

7.1 Moderation Principles

- **Be human:** Respond as people, not a faceless institution
- **Be fair:** Apply rules consistently
- **Be proportionate:** Match response to severity
- **Be timely:** Aim to respond within 24 hours (working days)
- **Document:** Keep records of significant moderation actions

7.2 Response Framework

Comment Type	Response
Positive/supportive	Like/react; thank if personal; share if appropriate
Genuine question	Answer helpfully; direct to website/DM for complex queries
Constructive criticism	Thank them; acknowledge the point; explain if appropriate
Complaint	Acknowledge; apologise for experience; take to DM/email
Factual correction	Thank them; verify; correct publicly if we were wrong
Mild negativity	Assess if response helps; often best to leave
Off-topic/spam	Hide; delete if repeated; no response needed
Policy violation	Hide/delete; warn if borderline; block if serious/repeated

7.3 Moderation Actions

Action	When to Use	Who Can Authorise
Like/React	Positive engagement	Social Media Manager
Reply	Questions, thanks, engagement	Social Media Manager

Hide	Off-topic, mildly inappropriate, spam	Social Media Manager
Delete	Clear policy violation, illegal content	Social Media Manager
Warn (via reply or DM)	First-time borderline violation	Social Media Manager
Block/ban	Repeated violations, serious breach, harassment	Head of Comms approval
Report to platform	Illegal content, serious harassment	Social Media Manager
Report to authorities	Credible threats, illegal activity, safeguarding	Director + legal

7.4 Content We Will Remove

- Abusive, threatening, or harassing language
- Discriminatory content (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, etc.)
- Personal attacks on staff, volunteers, or other users
- Spam, scams, or commercial promotion
- Misinformation that could cause harm
- Content that could prejudice legal proceedings
- Personal information (doxxing)
- Copyright-infringing material
- Sexually explicit content
- Content promoting illegal activity
- Graphic violence (unless historical/educational and appropriately contextualised)

7.5 What We Won't Remove

- Criticism of the Museum (unless abusive)
- Opinions we disagree with (unless discriminatory)
- Negative reviews (respond professionally)
- Debate and disagreement (unless it becomes personal)

7.6 Handling Difficult Situations

Complaints

1. Acknowledge publicly: *"We're sorry to hear this. Please DM us your details so we can look into it."*
2. Move to private channel
3. Log in complaints system
4. Follow complaints procedure
5. Follow up as appropriate

Trolling/Bad Faith Engagement

- **Do not feed the trolls:** Avoid extended public arguments
- One measured response if clarification helps; then disengage
- Hide subsequent inflammatory comments
- Block if behaviour continues

Pile-Ons/Viral Criticism

- Pause and assess before responding
- Escalate to Head of Comms immediately
- Follow crisis protocol if significant

Safeguarding Concerns

- Any content suggesting a child or vulnerable adult is at risk: escalate to Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Do not engage publicly
- Screenshot and preserve evidence
- Report to platform
- Contact authorities if immediate risk

SECTION 8: STAFF PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

8.1 Guiding Principles

Staff have the right to personal social media use. However, the Museum's reputation can be affected by staff behaviour online, particularly when:

- Staff are identifiable as Museum employees
- Content relates to the Museum, its work, or the heritage sector
- Conduct could constitute harassment, discrimination, or illegality

8.2 Guidelines for Personal Accounts

You MAY:

- Identify yourself as working at [Museum Name] in your bio
- Share Museum content to your personal networks
- Express personal opinions on matters unrelated to work
- Engage with sector discussions

You MUST:

- Make clear that personal views are your own, not the Museum's (e.g., "Views my own")
- Maintain confidentiality about internal matters
- Respect colleagues, visitors, and partners
- Comply with the law (defamation, harassment, data protection, etc.)
- Comply with the Museum's Code of Conduct and Equality policies

You MUST NOT:

- Disclose confidential or sensitive information
- Make statements that could reasonably be seen as official Museum positions
- Disparage the Museum, colleagues, Trustees, or partners
- Share images from non-public areas without permission
- Engage in harassment, discrimination, or bullying
- Use Museum logos or branding without authorisation

8.3 "Blurred Lines" Guidance

Scenario	Guidance
Curator tweets personal view on decolonisation	Fine if clearly personal opinion and not purporting to represent Museum policy
Front-of-house staff complains about visitor on TikTok	Not acceptable – even if anonymised, could be identified and brings Museum into disrepute
Manager criticises Government funding cuts on LinkedIn	Caution – could be seen as Museum position given seniority; discuss with Head of Comms
Volunteer shares photo from staff-only conservation area	Not acceptable without explicit permission

8.4 Disciplinary Implications

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, depending on severity. Relevant factors include:

- Was the Museum identified?
- Was the content discriminatory, harassing, or illegal?
- Was confidential information disclosed?
- What harm resulted?

Staff should seek guidance from HR or Head of Communications if uncertain.

SECTION 9: DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY

9.1 Key Principles for Social Media

Principle	Application
Lawful basis	Legitimate interests (engagement, promotion) for most public content; consent for competitions, newsletters
Transparency	Privacy notice must cover social media data processing
Data minimisation	Only collect what's necessary
Individual rights	Respond to access, deletion, and objection requests
Security	Protect account access; secure storage of personal data

9.2 What Personal Data Do We Process?

Data Type	Source	Purpose	Retention
Public profile info (name, handle, profile picture)	User's public profile	Community management, responding to queries	As long as publicly available
Comments and posts	User-generated	Community engagement	Platform retention; screenshots if needed for complaints
Direct messages	User-initiated	Customer service	12 months after resolution
Competition entries	User-submitted	Prize draw, winner notification	3 months after competition closes (unless consent for longer)
Analytics (aggregated)	Platform tools	Performance measurement	N/A (not personal data if aggregated)

9.3 Photographs and Video

Public Events

- Display clear signage at events where photography/filming occurs
- Offer opt-out mechanism (e.g., coloured lanyards, designated areas)
- Avoid close-ups of individuals without consent
- Take extra care with children - never photograph unaccompanied children

Identifiable Individuals

- Obtain explicit consent before posting images where individuals are the focus
- Use consent forms for planned shoots (template in Section 14)
- For UGC, verify the person posting has rights to the image

Children

- Parental/guardian consent required for identifiable images of under-18s
- Never name children in conjunction with images
- Use group shots from behind or at distance where possible
- Special care for Looked After Children or those with safeguarding concerns, check with event organiser

9.4 Data Breaches

A **personal data breach** includes:

- Unauthorised access to accounts containing DMs
- Accidental disclosure of personal information in posts
- Loss of devices containing personal data

Response Procedure:

1. Contain the breach (e.g., secure account, remove post)
2. Notify Data Protection Officer within 24 hours
3. Assess severity and risk to individuals
4. DPO determines if ICO notification required (within 72 hours if high risk)
5. Notify affected individuals if high risk to their rights
6. Document incident and response
7. Review and improve controls

SECTION 10: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & COPYRIGHT

10.1 Using Third-Party Content

Always Check

Content Type	Can We Use?
Our own photos/videos	Yes
Staff-created content (in work capacity)	Yes (Museum owns)
Licensed stock images	Check licence terms

Press images with permission	Within agreed terms
Public domain works	Yes (verify status)
Creative Commons licensed	Follow licence terms (attribution, etc.)
"Found on Google"	No, rights unknown
Screenshots of others' content	Rarely, fair dealing may apply for commentary
Embedding YouTube/platform content	Generally yes, platform ToS permit
Downloading and re-uploading others' videos	No
User-generated content	Only with explicit permission

Fair Dealing (UK)

Limited use without permission may be permitted for:

- **Criticism and review:** Quote a short extract to discuss/critique
- **Reporting current events:** News reporting (not photographs)
- **Parody:** Genuine parody or pastiche

This is narrower than US "fair use", when in doubt, seek permission.

10.2 Protecting Our Content

The Museum's social media content is protected by copyright. We should:

- Use watermarks on high-value images where appropriate
- Include copyright notices in profiles/descriptions
- Monitor for misuse of our content
- Take action against commercial misuse (contact infringer, platform takedown, legal if necessary)

Responding to Infringement

Severity	Response
Non-commercial sharing with credit	Generally tolerate; may comment positively
Non-commercial sharing without credit	Request credit be added
Commercial use without permission	Formal request to cease; escalate to legal
Misrepresentation/misleading use	Immediate takedown request; legal if necessary

10.3 Licensing Our Content

We may license images/content to third parties. All requests should go through [Collections/Communications] with appropriate agreements covering:

- Usage rights and restrictions
- Duration
- Fees (if applicable)
- Credit requirements
- Exclusivity (if any)

SECTION 11: ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

11.1 Legal Context

The **Equality Act 2010** requires reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people can access services, including digital content.

The **Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018** require public sector websites and apps (including social media used for statutory purposes) to meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

11.2 Accessibility Standards for Social Media

Images

Requirement	How to Implement
Alt text	Add descriptive alt text to all images (available on most platforms). Describe what's visually important—don't just say "image of museum."
Avoid text in images	Text in images isn't readable by screen readers. If essential, repeat all text in the post caption.
Colour contrast	Ensure sufficient contrast in graphics. Use a contrast checker.
Flashing content	Avoid content that flashes more than 3 times per second (seizure risk).

Alt Text Best Practice

Bad: "Photo"

Bad: "Museum object"

Okay: "Roman brooch"

Good: "A bronze Roman brooch in the shape of a horse, about 5cm long, with green patina. Found in Oxfordshire."

For decorative images: Brief description is fine; focus alt text effort on informational images

Video

Requirement	How to Implement
Captions	All videos must have accurate captions (auto-captions are a start, but review for accuracy)
Audio description	For videos where visual information isn't conveyed in speech, provide audio description or a descriptive transcript
No auto-play with sound	If auto-play is used, default to muted

Text Content

Requirement	How to Implement
Plain language	Avoid jargon; explain specialist terms
CamelCase hashtags	Write #MuseumFromHome not #museumfromhome (helps screen readers)
Emoji use	Use sparingly; don't use as bullet points; place at end of text
Avoid special characters	Decorative fonts (<i>Like this</i>) are unreadable to screen readers
Link text	Make link text descriptive, not "click here"

Platform-Specific Notes

- **Instagram:** Add alt text via "Advanced Settings" when posting
- **X/Twitter:** Alt text available when adding images
- **Facebook:** Auto-generates alt text but manual is better
- **LinkedIn:** Alt text available
- **TikTok:** Use captions; auto-captions available but check accuracy

11.3 Accessibility Checklist (Pre-Posting)

- Alt text added to all images
- Captions added/checked on video
- Hashtags in CamelCase
- Emojis at end, used sparingly
- No text-as-image (or text repeated in caption)

- Sufficient colour contrast in graphics
- Plain language used

SECTION 12: MONITORING, ANALYTICS & REVIEW

12.1 Monitoring

Daily

- Check all platforms for comments, messages, mentions
- Respond to queries within 24 hours (working days)
- Flag potential issues to Head of Communications

Weekly

- Review scheduled content
- Team content planning meeting
- Competitor/sector scan

Tools

- Native platform analytics
- Social media management platform (e.g., Hootsuite, Sprout, Buffer)
- Google Alerts for Museum name mentions

12.2 Key Performance Indicators

Metric	What It Measures	Target (example)
Follower growth	Audience building	+5% year-on-year
Engagement rate	Content resonance	>3% average
Reach/Impressions	Content visibility	Context-dependent
Link clicks	Conversion to website	Track against campaign goals
Response time	Customer service	<24 hours (working days)
Video views/ completion	Video content performance	>50% view-through on short-form
Sentiment	Audience perception	>80% positive/neutral

12.3 Reporting

Report	Frequency	Audience	Content
--------	-----------	----------	---------

Dashboard	Weekly	Comms team	Key metrics, notable posts, issues
Monthly report	Monthly	Senior Management	Performance vs KPIs, insights, recommendations
Annual review	Annually	Board	Year overview, trends, strategic recommendations
Campaign reports	Post-campaign	Relevant stakeholders	Campaign-specific metrics vs objectives

12.4 Policy Review

- **Annual review** of this policy (minimum)
- **Triggered review** following: significant incident, platform changes, legal updates, organisational change
- **Review process:** Head of Communications drafts revisions → Director approval → Board ratification if significant changes → Staff communication and training

SECTION 13: CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: The "Sexy" Object Post

Scenario: A small UK museum posted a Roman oil lamp with erotic imagery, using suggestive language and emojis. The post went viral, mostly positively, but some followers complained it was inappropriate, and a school group's teacher complained after students saw it.

What happened well:

- Creative, engaging content that reached new audiences
- Roman erotic art is legitimate historical content

What could have improved:

- Consider timing (posted during school hours)
- Sensitivity warning might have been appropriate
- Clearer escalation path when complaints began

Lessons for us:

- Adult content from collections is permissible but requires sensitivity
- Use content warnings where appropriate
- Have a planned response for predictable pushback
- Consider timing and likely audience

Case Study 2: The Accidental Controversy

Scenario: A national museum's "On This Day" post commemorated a historical figure. Research subsequently revealed the figure had links to slavery that the original post hadn't acknowledged. Critics accused the museum of whitewashing history.

What happened well:

- Museum responded promptly and transparently
- Acknowledged the omission and provided fuller context
- Used it as an opportunity to discuss their ongoing research

What could have improved:

- Better research before posting
- Amber-category review for historical figures

Lessons for us:

- Historical content about figures requires research into full context
- Have a process for correcting the record gracefully
- Transparency and humility when we get things wrong

Case Study 3: The Account Hack

Scenario: A museum's X account was compromised overnight. The hackers posted spam and offensive content before staff noticed the next morning.

What happened well:

- Staff acted quickly once discovered
- Pre-prepared holding statement deployed
- Transparent communication with followers

What could have improved:

- Two-factor authentication wasn't enabled
- No out-of-hours monitoring
- Shared password among team

Lessons for us:

- 2FA is non-negotiable
- Individual logins, not shared passwords
- Out-of-hours monitoring for high-follower accounts
- Pre-prepared hack response statement

Case Study 4: UGC Without Permission

Scenario: A museum reposted a visitor's Instagram photo without asking permission. The photographer, a professional, complained publicly that their work had been used without consent or credit.

What happened well:

- Museum apologised promptly
- Removed the post immediately
- Offered to properly credit and compensate

What could have improved:

- Should have asked permission first
- UGC process wasn't clear

Lessons for us:

- Always ask explicit permission for UGC
- Always credit
- Keep records of permissions
- Apologise swiftly and sincerely when we err

SECTION 14: CHECKLISTS & TEMPLATES

14.1 Pre-Posting Checklist (All Content)

Content Quality

- Spelling and grammar checked
- Facts verified
- Links tested and correct
- Image quality acceptable
- Correct aspect ratio for platform

Compliance

- Copyright cleared for all assets
- Photo permissions obtained (if people identifiable)
- Sensitive content reviewed at appropriate level
- Sponsor/partner relationship disclosed (if applicable)

Accessibility

- Alt text added to images
- Captions on video
- CamelCase hashtags
- Plain language used

Brand

- Tone appropriate to content and platform
- Consistent with content pillars
- Appropriate hashtags included

Scheduling

- Optimal posting time for platform
- No clash with sensitive dates/events
- Cross-platform coordination if needed

14.2 Photo/Video Consent Form

[MUSEUM NAME] – CONSENT FOR PHOTOGRAPHY/FILMING

I give permission for [Museum Name] to use photographs and/or video footage of me (and/or my child, if applicable below) for the following purposes:

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, etc.)
- Website
- Print publications and marketing materials
- Press and media
- All of the above

Your details:

- Name: _____
- Signature: _____
- Date: _____

If this consent is for a child under 18:

- Child's name: _____
- Your relationship to child: _____
- Parent/Guardian signature: _____
- Date: _____

I understand that:

- I can withdraw this consent at any time by contacting [contact details]
- Withdrawal cannot apply to materials already published
- Images may be edited for size/format but not in a way that misrepresents
- I will not receive payment for this use
- This consent is non-exclusive

For full details on how we handle personal data, see our Privacy Policy: [URL]

14.3 UGC Permission Log

Date	Platform	User Handle	Content Description	Permission Requested (Date)	Permission Granted (Date)	Published (Date)	Credit Given

14.4 Incident Log Template

Date/Time of incident: _____

Platform(s) affected: _____

Reported by: _____

Brief description of incident:

Category: Security Reputational Complaint Legal Other

Severity: Low Medium High Critical

Immediate actions taken:

Escalated to: _____

Response issued: Yes No Pending

Response text (if applicable):

Outcome:

Follow-up required: Yes No

Lessons learned:

Logged by: _____

Date: _____

14.5 Content Calendar Template

Week	Date	Platform	Content Type	Topic/ Description	Assets Needed	Owner	Status	Approval Level
							<input type="checkbox"/> Draft <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Published	<input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Amber <input type="checkbox"/> Red
							<input type="checkbox"/> Draft <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Published	<input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Amber <input type="checkbox"/> Red
							<input type="checkbox"/> Draft <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Published	<input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Amber <input type="checkbox"/> Red
							<input type="checkbox"/> Draft <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Published	<input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Amber <input type="checkbox"/> Red

14.6 Social Media Audit Checklist (Quarterly)

Account Security

- All accounts use 2FA
- Password manager in use
- Passwords changed if staff departed
- Access list reviewed and updated
- Recovery options current

Compliance

- Privacy notice up to date and covers social media
- Consent records organised and accessible
- No overdue DSARs

Content

- Content pillars balanced
- Brand voice consistent
- Accessibility standards maintained

Performance

- KPIs reviewed
- Underperforming content analysed
- Platform strategy still appropriate

Policy

- Staff aware of policy
- Training up to date
- Any incidents reviewed and addressed

SECTION 15: PUBLIC-FACING HOUSE RULES (READY TO PUBLISH)

This text is ready to adapt and publish on your website and social media profiles.

[MUSEUM NAME] SOCIAL MEDIA HOUSE RULES

Welcome to our social media community! We're delighted you're here. To keep this a positive space for everyone, we ask that you follow these simple guidelines.

We love to hear from you

We use social media to share stories, promote our events, and connect with our community. We read all your comments and messages, and while we can't always reply to everything, we do our best to respond to questions within 48 hours on working days.

Please be kind and respectful

We welcome conversation and debate, but we expect everyone to treat each other, and our team, with respect. We're all human.

We will remove content that is:

- Abusive, threatening, or harassing
- Discriminatory (including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, or discrimination based on religion)
- Defamatory or potentially libellous
- Spam, scams, or unsolicited advertising
- Sharing personal information about others
- Copyright infringing
- Illegal or promoting illegal activity
- Off-topic or deliberately disruptive
- Impersonating another person or organisation

We may block accounts that:

- Repeatedly break these rules
- Post content that is seriously harmful or illegal

A few more things

We're not always here: Our team monitors social media during office hours (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm, excluding bank holidays). We'll get back to you as soon as we can.

Your privacy: Please don't share personal details (email, phone, address) in public comments. If you need to share these, send us a direct message.

Your opinions are yours: Comments and opinions from our followers don't represent the views of [Museum Name].

Sharing and tagging: We love when you share your photos! If we'd like to repost, we'll always ask permission first. Feel free to tag us, we enjoy seeing what you're up to.

Complaints: If you have a formal complaint, please contact us at [email/URL] so we can investigate properly.

Thank you

Thank you for being part of our community. We're here to share, learn, and connect, and we're glad you're with us.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Contacts

Role	Name	Email	Phone
Head of Communications			
Social Media Manager			
Director			
Data Protection Officer			
HR Manager			
Safeguarding Lead			
IT Support			
Legal advisor			

Appendix B: Account Details

Platform	Account Name	URL	Primary Admin
Facebook			
Instagram			
X (Twitter)			
LinkedIn			
TikTok			
YouTube			

Appendix C: Training Record

Staff Name	Role	Date Trained	Trainer	Refresher Due

Appendix D: Version History

Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	[Date]	[Name]	Initial policy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I confirm that I have read and understood the [Museum Name] Social Media Policy Handbook. I agree to comply with this policy in my work for the Museum and, where relevant, in my personal social media use.

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____