

Rotary District 9810

Social Media Engagement Policy Guidelines – Jan 2019

Purpose

Social media offers the opportunity for people to create, share and consume content, connecting and engaging with others in our community, across the state, and around the world. The global popularity of social media has grown to the point where it is often a primary source of information and interaction.

Rotary embraces social media as an important tool to assist with its public image and public relations objectives, as well as attracting potential new members and community partners, connecting with like-minded people and organisations, and creating new opportunities to serve. Rotary also recognises the value of social media to members on a personal level, sharing information and ideas with family, friends and communities.

With the continued growth and impact of social media, Rotary District 9810 recognises the need to provide some policy guidelines to ensure that members understand the District's expectations and standards for social media engagement, particularly when members are involved in communicating about Rotary, its services, its people, its community partners and partner organisations.

Scope

In the context of these guidelines, 'social media' includes any online tool, platform, website or digital publishing medium that allows an individual to interact with it, upload and share information, comment or engage in conversation. Examples of these tools include (but are not limited to):

- Social networking sites – Facebook, Snapchat, Whatsapp and LinkedIn
- Video & photo sharing sites – Flickr, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest & Vimeo
- Micro-blogging sites – Twitter & Tumblr
- 'Blogs' – Corporate blogs, personal blogs & blogs hosted by media organisations
- Forums & discussion boards – Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups & Google Groups
- Information portals – Wikipedia & Answers.com

- Review websites – TripAdvisor & Yelp!
- Crowd funding websites – GoFundMe, KickStarter & MyCause.

It is recommended that all Rotary Clubs invest time into researching which platforms might suit their needs, their member capability, and how best to utilise them for Rotary objectives.

Application of the Guidelines

D9810 Rotary's Social Media Engagement Guidelines are intended for all D9810 Rotary Clubs and members of those Clubs. Clubs are encouraged to apply these guidelines and ensure they are circulated and understood by all members.

It is expected that Clubs may wish to develop these guidelines further, as may be deemed relevant to specific Club activities, or to address any concerns raised by members—please circulate your Club Guidelines / Statement / Policy to all members.

The golden rule of social media is to maintain the same core principles and values as you would do in any off-line social interaction. As Rotarians, we already hold ourselves accountable to a high standard of conduct and we must be mindful of this, even in new and unfamiliar forums.

If you become aware of any Social media interaction that is detrimental to Rotary, whether on your Club social media sites or otherwise—DO NOT engage in response—make your Club President aware of the incident who may seek District guidance to develop a Plan to address the matter accordingly.

Social Media Guidelines

There are three pillars of social media engagement to protect the interests of Rotary and its members. These are:

1. **Representation**
2. **Responsibility**
3. **Respect.**

It is also important to consider our core values and those expressed in the **Rotary 4 Way Test**.

1. Representation

Consider that you are a Rotarian 24 hours a day. Your conduct must always reflect the values upheld by Rotary – the same values that were considered when your Club accepted you as a member.

You are required to:

- Identify yourself as a Rotary member
- Ensure you do not imply in any way that you are authorised to speak on Rotary's behalf
- Ensure you do not knowingly use the identity of another Rotary member
- Be mindful during your social media engagements of the importance of not damaging Rotary's reputation and interests and/or bringing Rotary into disrepute.

2. Responsibility

You are personally responsible for the content of your online activity. In this context, you have a responsibility to ensure that:

- Any information about Rotary that you provide is informed and factually accurate, by checking the D9810 or Rotary.org website or with the relevant D9810 representative(s).
- If you wish to express your opinion, please ensure that you state that they are your personal opinions.

- If you are offering your personal perspective on a matter related to Rotary, be mindful that your commentary and opinion does not cause, or have the potential to cause, damage to the organisation or its interests and does not purport to be an official Rotary position.

You are required to:

- Use a simple disclaimer to ensure that your stated views and opinions are understood to be your own and not those of D9810 Rotary, nor Rotary International, when you refer to any aspect or works of Rotary
- Ensure you do not post material that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity, including about Rotary, its members, volunteers and partner organisations
- Think before you post and carefully consider the text, photos and videos from the perspective of those who may see them and react to them.
- Be wary of student photographs and the required school and parent permissions.

3. Respect

You are required to:

- Be respectful of Rotary D9810, its Clubs and members in everything you post online
- Be respectful of all other individuals and communities with which you interact online
- Be polite and respectful of other opinions, even in times of heated discussion and debate
- Adhere to the Terms of Use of the social media channel you are using, and seek to conform to the cultural and behavioural norms of the social media platform being used
- Respect copyright, privacy or any other applicable laws (see 'The Law' below).

The 4-Way Test

It is instructive to keep the 4-Way Test in mind when engaging in any social media or other online activity. The values inherent within this simple moral code, created by Rotarian Herbert J Taylor, in an era well before the advent of computers, stand the test of time.

Below are some simple examples of how the 4 Way Test might apply.

The 4-way test of the things we think, say or do (*online*):

	YES	NO
Is it the truth?	Verifiable facts about Rotary & Rotary projects Reports on Club activities Shared press releases from Rotary International	Conflicting Personal opinions Exaggerated claims Unverifiable statistics
Is it fair to all concerned?	Sharing good news stories about other Clubs' activities Promoting relevant causes	Self-promotion and bragging Putting other people down Multi-level marketing
Will it build goodwill and better friendships?	Sharing stories with others who may benefit Helping to connect people Compliments & encouraging words Liking, commenting on & reposting positive Rotary stories	Personal attacks Racist, sexist & discriminatory remarks
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?	Online donations and sharing information on Rotary causes to friends and associates Participate in Rotary polls or requests feedback Support your Club, district & RI online activities by engaging & interacting	Spamming Personal tirades Activities which involve conflicts of interest

Please feel free to consider your own examples and how you might apply the 4-Way Test to your online activities.

The Law

Over and above these guidelines, there are National and State laws and regulations that apply to online activity. These include, but are not limited to:

Commonwealth of Australia

- Broadcasting Services Act 1992
- Copyright Act 1968
- Crimes Act 1914
- Privacy Act 1988
- Criminal Code Act 1995
- Spam Act 2003

Victoria

- Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014
- Equal Opportunity Act 1977
- Defamation Act 2005
- Electronic Transactions Act 2000
- Fair Trading Act 2012

It is advisable to keep in mind that your online activities must remain above the law. It is recommended that you do your own research or consult a legal professional if you are in any doubt.

Some considerations of the legal consequences of social media misuse are noted below:

Misuse and Legal Consequences

Misuse of social media may involve:

- (i) a breach of Rotary obligations
- (ii) sexual harassment
- (iii) unlawful discrimination
- (iv) a criminal offence * (see below)
- (v) an infringement of the privacy of Rotarian and other persons such as students or parents, or
- (vi) exposure to legal liability.

*This will be regarded as a serious matter and appropriate action may be taken. Where there is a reasonable belief that illegal activity may have occurred, the District Governor may report the suspected illegal activity to the Police.

Offences and criminal charges

Various Victorian and Commonwealth legislation create criminal offences for the misuse of social media. Some such offences include the following:

Menace, harass or cause offence

It is a criminal offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cwth) to use a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence.

Defamation

If an employee publishes information that identifies a person; and the published content lowers the person's standing, brings that person into hatred, ridicule or contempt, or causes others to shun or avoid that person; the employee who published the information may find themselves personally defending an action of defamation.

Copyright

Copyright is the legal protection of literary, dramatic, artistic, and musical works, sound recordings and performances. It provides creators with the legal right to control the use of their creations. Publishing such works without the requisite permissions from the creator(s) may amount to a breach of the Copyright Act 1968.

If you have any concerns or questions about any of the above information, please contact the District 9810 Legal Officer, or the Public Image Chair, or the District Governor.

Social Media is a powerful tool for the promotion and development of Rotary goals and ideals. Rotary District 9810 encourages all Rotarians to become actively engaged and participate in this global, flexible and engaging communication medium.