

Social Networking Sites

SCR's and ASCR's: state our official position on internet use

Internet and Email: Acceptable use policy; see point 8:

The MSSC does not wish to and cannot prohibit the use of any social networking or interactive websites, however it does wish to protect the reputation of the SCC and safeguard, wherever possible, the interests of its members. Therefore at Appendix 2 to this Acceptable Use Policy, you will find guidance for the use of social networking sites for volunteers and cadets.

Appendix 2 Internets and Email –Acceptable use policy

Guidance on the use of social networking websites

See point 3:

Social networking sites like Facebook, Bebo, YouTube and MySpace can offer a great opportunity to reach millions of people. The MSSC is content for volunteers and cadets to post material on these sites relating to or referring to the MSSC or SCC, since it recognises that this is a valuable way to promote what we do to new audiences.

See point 5:

It is also important to be mindful of who you accept friend requests from. Consider your relationship with that person, is it professional or personal and what message that conveys to others, also consider what type of material you will be sharing on your site, and whether or not this will cause offence or compromise your position with that person in the real world. Social networking is a great leveller and operates from a platform of accessibility. For this reason it is not acceptable for an adult volunteer to accept a friend request form a cadet.

In order to avoid unnecessary adult to cadet contact all 'groups' set up on any social networking sites for MSSC/SCC use, promotion and communication must be closed groups allowing membership only by invitation from the MSSC/Unit moderator.

The recent questions raised about the official Sea Cadet UK Facebook page has highlighted the need to clarify this last statement (highlighted above in bold): Our SCR's operate on two fronts: they offer guidance to cadets and volunteers about things to be mindful of when setting up their own individual pages unrelated to SCC, and they promote responsible Facebook use if engaging as a representative for and on behalf of the SCC (i.e. a Unit Facebook page). This is because Facebook operates on two levels: Individual and organisational.

Individual: you set up your page, you determine your privacy settings (who can see what information) you issue friend requests to others, and you receive friend requests from others, you determine who to agree to have access to your page and you need to be mindful of the implications of allowing a friend access to your page and what they can see. Friends on a page can interact with one another have separate conversations, establish their own friends links.

The SCR's outline guidance for cadets and volunteers on things to consider when engaging in social media, and what to be mindful of when accepting friend requests and setting privacy settings. They are guidance because they cannot be enforced. However they also state that it is inappropriate for an SCC adult volunteer and as such a representative of the SCC to be friends with a cadet via a personnel facebook page, because we believe that SCC volunteers have a duty of care to observe and that involves setting boundaries on communication.

The SCC can do no more than that in the case of individual facebook pages.

Organisational: Organisations establish a Facebook page as a FAN page. This means that people can 'like' the page and become a fan of it. They can comment on posts made by the organisation but are less able to have conversations between fans, unless they privately decide via their own individual Facebook pages to become friends (see SCR guidance above). The purpose of a Fan page is to have lots of fans; it is a promotional tool and offers instant communication with lots of fans so it is very good at disseminating information fast. The organisation has a duty to disseminate appropriate information which is legal, safe, engaging and appropriate. (As per ASCR's). Ideally we want a combination of our cadets, volunteers, staff (all internal to the organization) and many other people (friends and supporters) who are external to the organization to be fans of our site so we develop a very broad ranging community of interest in the Sea Cadets; **by doing so we are not encouraging dialogue between these individuals and certainly not between adults and cadets.**

However, it is possible to click on the profile picture of a fan and go through to their individual page **ONLY** if that individual allows you to view it as per their own privacy settings. That is an independent decision individuals make based on their own preferences.

The Sea Cadet UK Facebook page is a 'fan' page. It has a link to the CEOPS (Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre run by the police) report abuse page and asks users to engage responsibly with the page and reminds them to remember the key 'e' rules: do not accept friend requests from people you do not know in real life and if in doubt report it.

We have established our page on the guidance from the Dept for Children, Schools and Families, and learnt via the best practice of other sites like ours which include: NSPCC, CEOPS, Scouts Association, ACF, Air Cadets, the Children's Society and Save the Children to name but a few. Our site is monitored and if anything inappropriate is posted it will be dealt with.

Facebook is a community of users and to interact with a Facebook page you must be logged in as a user of Facebook. So that people who are not Facebook users can see our page and what we are doing we have created a link to our page for non users to view. This is www.facebook.com/seacadetsuk

This is common practice for many organisations.

This allows a broad range of people to view what we are doing and who we are but it does not enable them to like the page or comment as to do that they must have their own Facebook account.



The aspiration is for sea cadet units to have their own unit FAN pages based on our model and linking in to our page.

In light of the recent discussions we will refresh the SCRs to reinforce the current guidance, make it clearer and produce a Q&A guide on how to set up a Facebook page for a Unit.

Clearly social networking opportunities and the technology that enables it and guides it is developing daily. This means that we must be vigilant and responsive to new directions and opportunities while at the same time being mindful of managing and minimizing the risk involved and inherent in all communications, whether those be virtual or more traditional. As such we will endeavour to update the SCR's on internet use policy regularly to reflect that.

Bottom Line: we want cadets, volunteers, members of staff and the wider general public to be fans of our site; we will not discourage Units from developing their own organizational sites and linking them to our main site, but they must be on brand and constructed in line with HQ guidance to follow (fan pages not friend pages); we do not want adult volunteers to be Facebook friends with cadets; if cadets or volunteers allow access to their personal information on their individual Facebook pages (which is their choice) then this could attract unwarranted attention from other users (both within the SCC and beyond), we can be mindful of that but cannot stop this, but this is no different from the potential for inappropriate relationships to form in the physical world within and around SCC Units