The Governing and Representative Body of

Arthur Findlay College

PIONEERING SPIRITUALISM
& PSYCHIC SCIENCES

# Social Media Policy

**Version:** June 2026
**Last Reviewed:** 9th June 2026
**Policy Owner:** Communications Officer
**Approved By:** National Executive Council (NEC)
**Review Cycle:** Annual, or sooner where required by legislation, regulation or operational need.

| Version Control | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Title** | The Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) & Arthur Findlay College (AFC) Social Media Policy | | | | |
| **Author** | **Version** | **Date** | **Review** | **Status** | **Comment** |
| Kyle Pedley | SM001 | 09.06.2026 | | Draft | Sent to SW, GF & PR for review |
| Kyle Pedley | SM002 | 12.06.2026 | | Draft | Final. |

# Contents

1. Introduction
2. When Using the SNU/AFC's Official Social Media Channels
3. When Using Personal Social Media Channels
4. Basic Principles
5. General Dos and Don'ts
6. Social Media and Safeguarding
7. Social Media and Copyright
8. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Social Media
9. Further Guidelines
10. Managing Community Engagement, Concerns and Problematic Behaviour
11. Conclusion – Positive Engagement and Responsible Communication

# 1. Introduction

## What is Social Media?

Social media refers to online platforms, websites and applications that enable users to create, share and engage with content, ideas and communities. This includes written content, images, videos, live broadcasts and other forms of digital communication.

Examples include Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube and other emerging platforms.

---

## Why Do We Use Social Media?

Social media plays an important role in helping the Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) communicate with members, students, volunteers and the wider public.

It enables us to:

- Promote the work and activities of the SNU and Arthur Findlay College (AFC).
- Share news, events, educational opportunities and resources.
- Engage with members and the wider Spiritualist community.
- Encourage participation in the work of the Union.
- Raise awareness of Spiritualism and the charitable objectives of the SNU.

The SNU aims to use social media in a positive, welcoming and responsible manner, creating online spaces that are informative, respectful and accessible to all.

---

## Why Do We Need a Social Media Policy?

Social media offers significant opportunities for communication and engagement. However, it also presents risks relating to reputation, safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection and legal compliance.

The distinction between personal and professional communications can become blurred online, particularly where individuals are publicly associated with the SNU.

This policy provides guidance on the responsible use of social media and sets out the standards expected of those who represent, work for, volunteer with or are otherwise associated with the Union.

The standards outlined within this document are intended to protect individuals, the wider membership and the reputation of the organisation, whilst encouraging positive and constructive engagement.

Publication and commentary on social media carry many of the same responsibilities and obligations as any other form of public communication.

---

## Who Does This Policy Apply To?

This policy applies to:

- Employees of the Spiritualists' National Union and Arthur Findlay College.
- Trustees and members of the National Executive Council.
- Ministers, tutors and students.
- Volunteers.
- Officers and members of committees, district councils, churches and centres.
- Individual members of the SNU.
- Any person whose role or position may reasonably be perceived as representing the Union.

The policy applies to activity undertaken on official SNU or AFC social media channels, as well as personal social media activity where an individual's association with the Union is known or reasonably identifiable.

---

## Purpose of this Policy

This policy is intended to:

- Promote the responsible use of social media.
- Protect the reputation and integrity of the SNU.
- Support compliance with safeguarding, data protection and other legal obligations.
- Provide guidance on managing official social media accounts.
- Help create a positive and respectful online environment for members and the public.

The policy should be read alongside other relevant SNU policies, including safeguarding, disciplinary, data protection and codes of conduct.

---

## Arthur Findlay College

As part of the Spiritualists' National Union, the Arthur Findlay College falls within the scope of this policy. References to the SNU throughout this document should be taken to include the Arthur Findlay College unless otherwise stated.

## Official Social Media Channels

At the time of publication, the SNU maintains official accounts on:

- Facebook
- Instagram

Additional platforms may be adopted where appropriate to support the objectives of the Union.

Members and the public should refer to official SNU channels and websites for authoritative information and announcements.

---

## External Guidance

This policy has been developed with regard to relevant guidance issued by:

- The Charity Commission.
- UK Government guidance on charities and social media.
- Applicable safeguarding legislation and guidance.
- Data protection legislation, including the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Users are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and act in accordance with its principles when engaging online.

# 2. When Using the SNU/AFC's Official Social Media Channels

The Spiritualists' National Union's social media channels are an important means of communicating with members, students, volunteers, supporters and the wider public. They represent the public face of the organisation and should therefore be managed with professionalism, accuracy and care.

Anyone authorised to publish content on behalf of the SNU or Arthur Findlay College must remember that they are acting as representatives of the organisation and are expected to uphold its values, charitable objectives and reputation at all times.

## Responsibility for Official Accounts

1. The Communications Officer is responsible for the strategic oversight and management of the SNU's social media presence.

2. Access to official SNU and AFC social media accounts will only be granted to authorised individuals approved by the Communications Officer or designated senior management.

3. No individual may create, administer or operate a social media account, page, group or channel that claims to represent the SNU, AFC, or any official body of the Union without prior authorisation.

4. Unauthorised accounts may cause confusion, reputational damage and inconsistencies in messaging and branding. Any concerns regarding unofficial accounts should be reported to the Communications Officer.

---

## Standards for Content

5. All content published on official channels should:

- Support the aims and charitable objectives of the SNU.
- Be accurate, factual and capable of verification.
- Be respectful and inclusive.
- Reflect the values and reputation of the Union.
- Provide value, information or engagement for members and the wider public.

6. Before publishing content, consideration should be given to:

- Accuracy and factual correctness.
- Legal and regulatory obligations.
- Safeguarding considerations.
- Copyright and intellectual property rights.
- The potential impact on individuals, members and the reputation of the Union.

7. Content should be presented to a professional standard. Reasonable care should be taken to minimise spelling, grammatical and factual errors. Images, graphics and video content should be clear, appropriate and consistent with the SNU's branding and communications standards.

8. Those managing official channels should take reasonable steps to verify information before publication and should not assume that third-party content is accurate simply because it has been widely shared.

9. Where an error has been made, it should be corrected promptly and transparently.

---

## Engagement and Communication

10. Official social media channels should be used to encourage positive engagement with members, students, churches, centres and the wider public.
11. Responses to enquiries, comments and messages should be timely, professional and proportionate.
12. Whilst engagement is encouraged, administrators should exercise judgement and avoid becoming involved in arguments, inflammatory exchanges or discussions that may escalate conflict.
13. Not every comment or criticism requires a response. Where a response is unlikely to be constructive, it may be more appropriate not to engage.
14. If there is uncertainty regarding how to respond to a particular issue, guidance should be sought from the Communications Officer or designated senior manager before responding.

---

## Personal Opinions and Organisational Positions

15. Individuals posting on behalf of the SNU must avoid expressing personal opinions through official channels.
16. Official channels should communicate the position of the Union and not the views of individual staff, volunteers, trustees, tutors or members.
17. Care should be taken when liking, sharing, reposting or endorsing third-party content, as such actions may reasonably be interpreted as support for the views expressed.
18. Where there is uncertainty regarding the Union's position on a particular issue, no public statement should be made until guidance has been obtained.

---

## Photography, Video and Consent

19. Appropriate care must be taken when posting content featuring identifiable individuals.

20. Where photographs, videos, interviews or testimonials are used, appropriate permissions should be obtained in accordance with SNU policies and applicable data protection requirements.
21. Particular care must be exercised when content features children, young people or vulnerable adults.
22. Images or footage of children or young people must not be published without appropriate consent from a parent, guardian or other authorised person, in accordance with the SNU's safeguarding procedures.

---

## Copyright and Third-Party Content

23. All necessary rights, permissions and licences must be obtained before publishing content owned by third parties.
24. Copyrighted material, including photographs, videos, music, written works and graphics, must not be used without permission or lawful authority.
25. Individuals supplying content for publication are responsible for ensuring that appropriate permissions have been obtained.

---

## Content Submitted by Branches, Churches and Committees

26. Branches, churches, centres, district councils and committees may submit content for consideration on the Union's official social media channels.
27. Submitted content should meet the professional and branding standards expected by the SNU.
28. Where content requires amendment or redesign before publication, contributors may be asked to revise it or seek assistance from the Union's design and communications resources.
29. The Communications Officer reserves the right to decline content that does not meet the required standards or is inconsistent with the objectives of the organisation.

---

## Political Neutrality

30. The SNU is politically neutral and does not support or endorse political parties or candidates.
31. Official social media channels must not be used to promote political parties, candidates or party-political campaigns.
32. The SNU may comment on matters relevant to its charitable purposes where appropriate, but any such communication must remain non-partisan and consistent with Charity Commission guidance.

---

## Complaints, Sensitive Issues and Reputational Risk

33. Complaints received through social media should be handled professionally and, where appropriate, directed to the Union's formal complaints procedure.
34. Individuals managing official channels should avoid responding to complaints or allegations without first considering the potential reputational, legal or safeguarding implications.
35. Any issue that may attract significant public attention, media interest or reputational risk should be referred immediately to the Communications Officer or General Manager.
36. Social media issues can escalate rapidly. Prompt reporting of concerns enables the Union to respond appropriately and minimise potential harm.
37. The SNU actively monitors its social media presence and may take appropriate action where content, comments or activity pose a risk to the organisation, its members or the wider public.

# 3. When Using Personal Social Media Channels as a SNU Member, Staff Member, Trustee, Tutor, Minister or Volunteer

The Spiritualists' National Union recognises and respects the right of individuals to use social media in a personal capacity.

This policy is not intended to restrict lawful personal use of social media. However, where an individual's association with the SNU is known, identifiable or reasonably discoverable, their online activity may affect public perceptions of the Union and the wider Spiritualist movement.

Individuals associated with the SNU are therefore expected to exercise good judgement and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values, principles and reputation of the organisation.

---

## Personal Responsibility and Representation

1. Individuals should be mindful that content published on personal social media accounts may be viewed by members, students, colleagues, the media and the wider public.
2. Where an individual's role within the SNU is publicly known, their online activity may be perceived as reflecting upon the Union, regardless of whether they are posting in a personal capacity.
3. Particular care should be taken by those holding positions of leadership, responsibility or public visibility within the Union, including:

- Trustees.
- Members of the National Executive Council.
- Ministers.
- Tutors.
- Senior staff.
- Committee officers.
- Representatives acting on behalf of the SNU.

4. Whilst individuals are entitled to hold and express personal opinions, they should avoid creating the impression that personal views represent the official position of the SNU.

---

## Personal Disclaimers

5. Where individuals regularly discuss matters relating to the SNU, Spiritualism or their role within the organisation, they are encouraged to include an appropriate disclaimer on their social media profiles, websites or blogs.
6. An example disclaimer is:

*"The views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or positions of the Spiritualists' National Union."*

7. The use of a disclaimer does not remove an individual's responsibility to conduct themselves appropriately or protect the reputation of the Union.

---

## Personal Blogs, Websites and Public Platforms

8. Individuals who operate personal blogs, websites, podcasts, video channels or similar platforms that reference their involvement with the SNU should ensure that content is consistent with this policy.
9. Where a potential conflict of interest may arise, guidance should be sought from the Communications Officer or an appropriate senior officer.
10. Individuals should avoid presenting personal commentary as official guidance, policy or statements on behalf of the Union unless expressly authorised to do so.

---

## Conduct and Professionalism

11. Individuals should use social media responsibly and respectfully.
12. When participating in discussions online, individuals should:

- Engage courteously with others.
- Respect differing viewpoints.
- Avoid personal attacks and inflammatory language.
- Correct mistakes where appropriate.
- Consider the potential impact of their comments before publishing them.

13. Passionate discussion and robust debate are entirely acceptable. However, abuse, harassment, bullying, intimidation and personal hostility are not.

14. If there is any doubt about whether content is appropriate, individuals should refrain from posting until they have considered the matter further or sought advice.

15. Before posting, commenting, sharing or reacting to content, individuals should consider how the content may be perceived by:

- Members of the public.
- SNU members.
- Students and volunteers.
- Churches and centres.
- The media.
- External stakeholders.

---

## Engagement with Public Figures and External Organisations

16. From time to time, the SNU may engage with public figures, journalists, media organisations, politicians and other influential individuals or bodies.

17. Individuals should avoid independently approaching such persons on behalf of the Union without appropriate authorisation.

18. This includes requesting endorsements, publicity, media coverage or public support for the SNU through personal social media accounts.

19. Individuals who become aware of opportunities, contacts or relationships that may benefit the Union are encouraged to pass this information to the Communications Officer or General Manager for consideration.

---

## Media Enquiries

20. If an individual is approached by a journalist, media outlet or other third party regarding social media content that relates to the SNU, they should not provide comment on behalf of the organisation.

21. Such enquiries should be referred promptly to the Communications Officer or General Manager.

22. Only authorised individuals may make public statements on behalf of the SNU.

---

## Political Activity

23. The SNU is a politically neutral organisation and does not support or endorse political parties or candidates.
24. Individuals remain entitled to participate in political activity in a personal capacity.
25. However, where an individual's association with the SNU is known, they should take care to distinguish personal political opinions from the position of the organisation.
26. Personal political activity should not create the impression that the SNU supports, opposes or endorses a particular political party, candidate or campaign.
27. Individuals should remain alert to potential conflicts of interest between personal political activity and their responsibilities within the Union.

---

## Privacy and Online Safety

28. Individuals should take reasonable steps to protect their privacy and personal security online.
29. Users are encouraged to:

- Regularly review privacy settings.
- Use strong passwords and account security measures.
- Exercise caution when sharing personal information.
- Be mindful of the long-term visibility of online content.

30. Content published online may be copied, shared, archived or reproduced by others, even after it has been deleted.
31. Individuals should therefore assume that anything posted online may become publicly accessible.

---

## Supporting the Work of the SNU

32. The SNU welcomes and encourages positive engagement with its official communications and activities.
33. Members, staff, volunteers, Ministers, tutors and supporters are encouraged to share official SNU content where appropriate.

34. Personal advocacy and support can help raise awareness of the Union's work and contribute positively to public engagement.

35. However, individuals should exercise judgement when commenting on controversial issues or content that may be misunderstood or misrepresented.

36. Where concerns arise regarding content, misinformation or potential reputational risks, these should be brought to the attention of the Communications Officer as soon as reasonably possible.

---

## Upholding the Values of the Union

37. Whether acting in a personal or professional capacity, individuals associated with the SNU should strive to conduct themselves online in a manner that reflects positively upon:

- The Spiritualists' National Union.
- The wider Spiritualist movement.
- Their church, centre, district or committee.
- Their fellow members, colleagues and volunteers.

38. Respect, courtesy, integrity and personal responsibility should remain the guiding principles of all online engagement.

39. Individuals should remember that their online conduct can contribute significantly to how the Union and Spiritualism are perceived by the wider public.

# 4. Basic Principles

The following principles underpin all social media activity undertaken by individuals associated with the Spiritualists' National Union. They should be considered alongside the more detailed guidance contained elsewhere in this policy.

These principles apply whether an individual is posting through an official SNU account or through a personal account where their association with the Union is known or reasonably identifiable.

---

## 4.1 Representation and Responsibility

1. Individuals associated with the SNU should remember that their online conduct may influence how the Union, its affiliated churches and centres, and the wider Spiritualist movement are perceived.
2. Ministers, tutors, trustees, officers, committee members, volunteers and staff members may be viewed by others as representatives of the Union, regardless of whether they are posting through an official or personal account.
3. Individuals are responsible for the content they publish, share, endorse or otherwise engage with online.
4. Social media activity should reflect the values, objectives and reputation of the Union and should not undermine public confidence in the organisation.

---

## 4.2 Duty to the Charity

5. Trustees have a legal duty to act in the best interests of the charity and to safeguard its reputation and resources.
6. Employees, volunteers and office holders are similarly expected to support and protect the interests of the organisation through their conduct and communications.
7. Social media can be a valuable tool for charitable engagement and public outreach; however, it can also create reputational, legal and safeguarding risks if used irresponsibly.
8. All individuals associated with the SNU should therefore exercise care, judgement and professionalism in their online activity.

---

## 4.3 Personal Accountability

9. Social media is not exempt from the law.
10. Individuals remain personally accountable for content they publish online and may be liable for breaches of legislation relating to:

- Data protection and privacy.

- Defamation and libel.
- Copyright and intellectual property.
- Harassment and discrimination.
- Safeguarding obligations.
- Equality legislation.
- Criminal law.

11. The fact that content is posted on a personal account does not remove an individual's responsibility for its consequences.

---

## 4.4 Respect and Professional Conduct

12. The SNU encourages respectful discussion, constructive debate and the exchange of ideas.
13. Individuals should engage with others courteously and in good faith, even where disagreements arise.
14. Personal attacks, abusive behaviour, harassment, intimidation or conduct likely to cause unnecessary conflict are inconsistent with the values of the Union.
15. Respect for others should remain a central consideration in all online interactions.

---

## 4.5 Online Content and Public Visibility

16. Content published online may remain accessible indefinitely, even where it is subsequently edited or deleted.
17. Social media content can be copied, archived, shared or reported by others without the knowledge or consent of the original author.
18. Before posting, individuals should consider whether they would be comfortable with the content being viewed by:

- Members of the public.
- Fellow members.
- Students and volunteers.
- Journalists and media organisations.
- Regulators.
- Future employers or professional contacts.

19. If content would be inappropriate in a public meeting, official publication or professional setting, it is unlikely to be appropriate on social media.

---

## 4.6 Media and Public Interest

20. Content shared online may attract attention beyond its intended audience.
21. Posts relating to the SNU, Spiritualism or matters of public interest may be reported, quoted or reproduced by others, including the media.
22. Individuals should therefore exercise caution when discussing sensitive issues and avoid making statements that could be misunderstood as official positions of the Union.
23. Any media enquiries relating to the SNU should be referred to the Communications Officer or designated senior manager in accordance with this policy.

---

## 4.7 Separation of Personal and Official Accounts

24. Individuals are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between personal and official social media activity wherever practicable.
25. Where possible:

- Official accounts should only be used for official business.
- Personal accounts should not be used to conduct official communications.
- Separate passwords and appropriate security measures should be maintained.
- Access to official accounts should be restricted to authorised individuals.

26. Clear separation between personal and organisational activity helps reduce risks relating to security, confidentiality and reputational harm.

---

## 4.8 Privacy and Security

27. Individuals should familiarise themselves with the privacy settings available on the social media platforms they use.
28. Privacy settings should be reviewed regularly and adjusted where appropriate.
29. Whilst privacy settings can help limit access to content, they do not guarantee confidentiality.

30. Individuals should therefore assume that any content published online may ultimately become public.

---

## 4.9 The Guiding Principle

31. The guiding principle of this policy is simple:

**Always communicate online in a manner that reflects positively on yourself, the Spiritualists' National Union, and the wider Spiritualist movement.**

32. When uncertain whether a post, comment, image, video or interaction is appropriate, individuals should pause, consider the potential consequences and seek advice where necessary before proceeding.

# 5. General Dos and Don'ts

The following guidance is intended to support individuals in applying the principles outlined within this policy. Whilst not exhaustive, these examples provide practical expectations for social media use by those associated with the Spiritualists' National Union.

---

## Do

### 5.1 Be Respectful

1. Treat others with courtesy, dignity and respect, even where opinions differ from your own.
2. Recognise that members, churches, centres and individuals may hold differing theological, philosophical or organisational viewpoints.
3. Where disagreements arise, engage constructively and professionally, seeking understanding rather than conflict.
4. Public discussion and debate should be conducted in a manner that reflects positively on the Union and the wider Spiritualist movement.

---

## 5.2 Be Honest and Accurate

5. Take reasonable steps to ensure information shared online is accurate and truthful.
6. Verify facts before publishing or sharing content.
7. If you become aware that information you have posted is inaccurate, correct it promptly and transparently.
8. Avoid speculation presented as fact.

---

## 5.3 Respect Privacy and Confidentiality

9. Respect the privacy of members, students, volunteers, staff and members of the public.
10. Do not discuss individuals, personal circumstances or private matters without appropriate consent.
11. Remember that information shared in confidence should remain confidential unless authorised for disclosure.
12. Consider carefully whether information belongs to you to share before posting it online.

---

## 5.4 Support Positive Engagement

13. Use social media to celebrate the work of the SNU, its churches, centres, volunteers, students, Ministers and members.
14. Share positive news, achievements, events, educational opportunities and examples of good practice where appropriate.
15. Encourage constructive dialogue and meaningful engagement.
16. Where content relates to another individual, organisation or event, ensure appropriate permission has been obtained before publication.

---

## 5.5 Protect Children and Vulnerable Adults

17. Ensure that safeguarding considerations remain paramount when publishing content involving children, young people or vulnerable adults.
18. Obtain appropriate consent before publishing photographs, videos or identifying information.
19. Follow all relevant safeguarding policies and procedures.

---

### 5.6 Comply with Legal and Regulatory Requirements

20. Ensure social media activity complies with:
- Safeguarding requirements.
- Data protection legislation.
- Copyright law.
- Defamation law.
- Equality legislation.
- Charity Commission guidance.
- Any other applicable legal or regulatory obligations.

21. When uncertain, seek advice before publishing content.

---

### 5.7 Think Before You Post

22. Consider how a post may be interpreted by different audiences.
23. Remember that tone and intent can easily be misunderstood online.
24. Review content before posting and consider whether it contributes positively to discussion.
25. If there is significant doubt about whether something should be published, take time to reflect and seek guidance where necessary.

---

## Don't

### 5.8 Do Not Engage in Personal Attacks

26. Do not use social media to insult, ridicule, belittle or humiliate others.

27. Avoid personal attacks, inflammatory language or behaviour that could reasonably be viewed as bullying, harassment or intimidation.
28. Disagreement with a viewpoint does not justify disrespect towards the individual expressing it.

---

## 5.9 Do Not Share or Endorse Harmful Content

29. Do not share, repost, promote or otherwise endorse content that is abusive, discriminatory, hateful or intentionally misleading.
30. Remember that liking, reacting to, sharing or reposting content may reasonably be interpreted as support or endorsement of that content.
31. Individuals should therefore exercise care when engaging with third-party content.

---

## 5.10 Do Not Discriminate

32. Never publish content that could reasonably be considered racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, discriminatory or otherwise prejudicial.
33. The SNU is committed to fostering an environment of dignity, inclusion and mutual respect.
34. Behaviour that undermines these principles may result in disciplinary or governance action.

---

## 5.11 Do Not Engage with Deliberately Provocative Behaviour

35. Avoid engaging in prolonged exchanges with individuals who are clearly acting in bad faith or seeking to provoke conflict.
36. Responding to hostile or inflammatory behaviour often escalates the situation rather than resolving it.
37. Where appropriate, utilise moderation tools or report concerns through the appropriate channels rather than engaging further.

---

### 5.12 Do Not Engage in Gossip

38. Social media should not be used to spread rumours, speculation or gossip relating to individuals, committees, churches, centres or organisational matters.
39. If information is not yours to share, do not share it.
40. Consider whether publication could breach confidentiality, safeguarding requirements, data protection obligations or defamation law.

---

### 5.13 Do Not Use Social Media as a Means of Aggression

41. Social media should never be used as a vehicle for personal disputes, vendettas or hostile campaigns.
42. Where misinformation requires correction, this should be done calmly, factually and respectfully.
43. The objective should always be to inform, clarify and resolve issues rather than to embarrass, punish or publicly criticise others.

---

## A Final Reminder

44. Social media interactions should be guided by the same standards of behaviour expected at SNU events, meetings, churches, centres and educational settings.
45. Individuals should strive to communicate in ways that are respectful, constructive and reflective of the values of the Spiritualists 'National Union.
46. Before posting, commenting, sharing or reacting to content, ask:

**"Would this contribute positively to the reputation of the SNU, the wider Spiritualist movement and my own integrity?"**

If the answer is uncertain, further consideration should be given before engaging.

# 6. Social Media and Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a fundamental responsibility of everyone involved with the Spiritualists' National Union.

The use of social media presents valuable opportunities for communication and engagement; however, it also carries risks relating to the safety, wellbeing and privacy of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

All individuals associated with the SNU must ensure that their online conduct reflects the Union's safeguarding commitments and complies with the most current safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance issued by the Union.

---

## Safeguarding Responsibilities

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
2. All social media activity should be undertaken in a manner that promotes the welfare, dignity and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
3. Individuals should remain aware that online communication can create opportunities for inappropriate contact, boundary issues, harassment, bullying, grooming or exploitation.
4. The same safeguarding standards that apply in face-to-face settings apply equally to digital communications and social media activity.

---

## Compliance with SNU Safeguarding Policies

5. All individuals must familiarise themselves with, and act in accordance with, the most up-to-date safeguarding policies and guidance issued by the Spiritualists ' National Union.
6. The latest safeguarding policies, procedures, guidance documents and reporting information can be accessed via the Union's safeguarding webpage:

**www.snu.org.uk/safeguarding**

7. Where there is any uncertainty regarding safeguarding responsibilities, individuals should seek guidance before engaging online.
8. Compliance with this Social Media Policy does not replace or supersede compliance with the Union's safeguarding policies and procedures.

## Appropriate Online Boundaries

9. Appropriate professional and personal boundaries should be maintained at all times.
10. Staff, Ministers, tutors, volunteers and others holding positions of trust should exercise particular care when interacting online with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
11. Wherever reasonably practicable, communication relating to SNU activities should take place through official channels, pages, groups or approved communication systems rather than personal social media accounts.
12. Individuals should avoid creating unnecessary one-to-one social media relationships that could blur professional, pastoral or safeguarding boundaries.
13. Consideration should always be given to how online interactions may be perceived by others and whether they could create actual or perceived safeguarding concerns.

## Sharing Information and Images

14. Particular care must be taken when publishing photographs, videos, testimonials or other content that identifies children, young people or vulnerable adults.
15. Appropriate consent must be obtained before publishing such content, in accordance with the Union's safeguarding and data protection requirements.
16. Individuals should consider whether publication could inadvertently reveal personal information, locations, routines or other details that may create risks.
17. Information relating to safeguarding matters must never be shared through social media.
18. Concerns, allegations, disclosures or safeguarding investigations should always be handled through appropriate safeguarding procedures and never discussed publicly online.

## Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

19. If an individual becomes aware of content, communication or behaviour online that raises safeguarding concerns, they should act promptly and in accordance with the Union's safeguarding procedures.
20. Safeguarding concerns should not be investigated through social media or managed informally.
21. Where a safeguarding concern arises, it should be reported through the appropriate safeguarding channels as soon as possible.
22. If there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be contacted without delay.

---

## Safeguarding Contact

Questions regarding safeguarding, online conduct, safeguarding concerns or the application of safeguarding policies should be directed to the Union's Safeguarding Manager.

**Gemma Faraway**
Safeguarding Manager
Email: **gemma.faraway@snu.org.uk**

Further safeguarding guidance, reporting information and current policy documents can be found at:

**www.snu.org.uk/safeguarding**

---

## A Safeguarding Reminder

23. Before posting, sharing or engaging with content online, individuals should consider:
- Does this protect the welfare and dignity of those involved?
- Does this comply with the SNU's safeguarding policies?
- Could this create a safeguarding concern, either now or in the future?
- Would I be comfortable justifying this action under the Union's safeguarding procedures?

24. Where there is doubt, advice should always be sought before proceeding.

The safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults must take precedence over convenience, publicity or engagement on social media.

# 7. Social Media and Copyright

The Spiritualists' National Union is committed to respecting copyright, intellectual property rights and the work of content creators.

When publishing content on social media, individuals must ensure they have the necessary rights, permissions or licences to use and share material. Failure to do so may expose both the individual and the Union to legal, financial and reputational risks.

---

## Understanding Copyright

1. Copyright protects original creative works, including but not limited to:

- Photographs and images.
- Videos and films.
- Music and audio recordings.
- Books, articles and written content.
- Graphics and artwork.
- Presentations and educational materials.
- Hymns, song lyrics and musical arrangements.

2. In most circumstances, copyright protection exists automatically and does not require formal registration.

3. The fact that content is publicly available online does not mean it is free to use or reproduce.

4. Before using any third-party content, individuals should satisfy themselves that they have the legal right to do so.

---

## Responsibilities When Publishing Content

5. Individuals must ensure that all content published through official SNU channels complies with copyright legislation and licensing requirements.

6. Content should only be published where:

- Permission has been obtained from the copyright holder.
- A valid licence exists.
- The content is in the public domain.

- The intended use is otherwise permitted by law.

7. Responsibility for obtaining permissions rests with the individual supplying or publishing the content.
8. Where there is uncertainty regarding ownership or usage rights, the content should not be published until clarification has been obtained.

---

## Images and Photography

9. Particular care should be taken when sourcing images from the internet.
10. Most images available online remain subject to copyright, even when they can be viewed or downloaded free of charge.
11. Individuals should not assume that an image found through a search engine is available for unrestricted use.
12. Wherever reasonably practicable, the original creator or photographer should be credited when using their work.
13. Images commissioned, created or owned by the SNU should be stored and managed in accordance with internal procedures to ensure appropriate use and attribution.

---

## Music, Video and Audio Content

14. Copyright considerations apply equally to music, audio recordings, video clips, livestreams and broadcasts.
15. Individuals should ensure that any music, recordings or video content used in social media posts, livestreams or promotional material is appropriately licensed.
16. Particular care should be taken when using:

- Commercial music recordings.
- Hymns and worship materials.
- Performance recordings.
- Television or film extracts.
- Content sourced from third-party websites or social media platforms.

17. The use of copyrighted material without permission may result in content removal, copyright claims, platform sanctions or legal action.

---

## Written Content and Publications

18. Articles, books, blogs, newsletters and other written materials remain protected by copyright unless otherwise stated.
19. Short quotations may sometimes be used where legally permitted; however, substantial reproduction of another person's work should not occur without permission.
20. Where content is referenced, appropriate attribution should be provided.
21. Individuals should avoid copying and republishing articles, educational materials or publications without authorisation.

---

## Copyright and SNU Content

22. Content produced by the SNU may itself be subject to copyright protection.
23. The Union reserves the right to control how its publications, branding, logos, images and materials are used.
24. Individuals should not modify, reproduce or distribute official SNU content in ways that could misrepresent the organisation or create confusion regarding its origin or purpose.

---

## Useful Copyright Resources

25. Individuals seeking copyright-free or appropriately licensed imagery may find the following resources helpful:

- Unsplash
- Pixabay
- Gratisography
- Flickr (where images are clearly licensed under an appropriate Creative Commons licence)

26. Users should always check the current licensing terms of any platform before using content obtained from it.
27. The Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) website provides useful guidance regarding copyright compliance for churches and faith-based organisations and may be a helpful reference where relevant.

## Seeking Advice

28. Where uncertainty exists regarding copyright, licensing or intellectual property rights, advice should be sought before content is published.
29. Individuals should not assume that content can be used simply because it has previously appeared online or has been shared by others.
30. When in doubt, obtain permission or choose alternative content.

## A Copyright Reminder

31. Respect for copyright is a matter of both legal compliance and ethical practice.
32. The SNU values the work of creators, artists, authors, photographers and musicians and expects all individuals associated with the Union to do the same.
33. Before publishing content, always ask:

**"Do I have the right to use this material, and can I demonstrate that right if asked?"**

If the answer is uncertain, the content should not be published until appropriate permission or clarification has been obtained.

# 8. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Social Media

The Spiritualists' National Union recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly common in content creation, communication, image generation and online engagement.

Whilst AI technologies can offer valuable opportunities to support communications and administrative activities, they also introduce important legal, ethical, safeguarding and reputational considerations.

Individuals associated with the SNU are expected to use AI responsibly and in a manner consistent with this policy and all other relevant Union policies.

---

## Responsible Use of AI

1. Any use of AI-generated content should be undertaken with care and professional judgement.
2. Individuals remain responsible for the accuracy, appropriateness and legality of any content they publish, regardless of whether it has been created wholly or partly through the use of AI tools.
3. Information generated by AI should always be checked for accuracy before publication.
4. AI-generated content should not be presented as factual without appropriate verification.

---

## Personal Data and Confidential Information

5. Individuals must not upload confidential, sensitive or personal information relating to members, students, volunteers, staff or members of the public into AI platforms unless they are authorised to do so and such use complies with applicable data protection legislation.
6. Particular care should be taken when handling:

- Personal contact details.
- Safeguarding information.
- Complaints and disciplinary matters.
- Internal SNU communications.
- Financial information.
- Personal data protected by UK GDPR.

7. Information entered into AI systems may be retained, processed or used in ways that are outside the control of the individual submitting it.
8. Users should therefore exercise caution and ensure compliance with the Union's data protection obligations.

---

## Images, Recordings and Consent

9. Photographs, video recordings and audio recordings of individuals should not be uploaded to AI platforms without appropriate consent.
10. Particular care should be exercised when uploading images of:

- Ministers.
- Mediums.
- Tutors.
- Speakers.
- Demonstrators.
- Volunteers.
- Staff members.
- Students.
- Members of the public.

11. Many AI platforms require users to grant extensive licences or usage rights over content submitted to them.
12. Uploading photographs or recordings of individuals to AI systems without their knowledge or consent may compromise their rights, expectations of privacy or control over how their image, voice or likeness is used.
13. In some circumstances, such activity may create legal, safeguarding, copyright or data protection concerns.
14. Individuals should therefore obtain appropriate permission before uploading images, recordings or likenesses of others to AI platforms.
15. Where consent cannot be obtained, the material should not be uploaded.

---

## Ownership and Intellectual Property

16. Individuals should be aware that some AI providers require users to grant licences or rights over content submitted to their systems.

17. This may include photographs, artwork, written content, recordings and other intellectual property.
18. Before uploading any content to an AI platform, users should review and understand the provider's terms of service and licensing arrangements.
19. Content owned by the SNU, Arthur Findlay College, affiliated churches, centres or individual contributors should not be uploaded where doing so could compromise ownership rights or intellectual property protections.

---

## AI-Generated Images and Media

20. AI-generated images, video or audio should not be used in a manner that could mislead, deceive or misrepresent reality.
21. Individuals should not create or distribute synthetic images, recordings or "deepfake" content depicting another person without their knowledge and consent.
22. AI-generated content must not be used in a way that could damage the reputation of an individual, the Union or the wider Spiritualist movement.
23. Any AI-generated content used for official SNU purposes should be reviewed carefully prior to publication.

---

## Safeguarding Considerations

24. AI tools should never be used in a way that compromises safeguarding responsibilities.
25. Images or information relating to children, young people or vulnerable adults must not be uploaded to AI platforms unless there is a clear lawful basis, appropriate consent and compliance with the Union's safeguarding policies.
26. Individuals should always refer to the most up-to-date safeguarding guidance available via:

**www.snu.org.uk/safeguarding**

---

## A Final Reminder

27. The use of AI does not remove personal responsibility.
28. Individuals remain accountable for any content they create, upload, publish or distribute using AI technologies.
29. Before using AI tools, ask:

**"Do I have the right to use this content, do I have the consent of those involved, and could this create legal, safeguarding or reputational risks?"**

If there is any uncertainty, advice should be sought before proceeding.

# 9. Further Guidelines

The following guidance should be read alongside all previous sections of this policy and applies to both official and personal social media activity where an individual's association with the Spiritualists' National Union is known or reasonably identifiable.

---

## Libel and Defamation

1. Individuals must not publish content that could be considered defamatory towards another person, organisation or group.
2. Defamation occurs when a false statement is communicated to others in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, damage to a person's reputation.
3. Social media posts, comments, images, videos, memes and shared content may all give rise to defamation claims.
4. Individuals should exercise particular caution when discussing:

- Complaints.
- Disciplinary matters.
- Committee decisions.
- Church or centre disputes.
- Personal conduct allegations.
- Matters involving named individuals.

5. If concerns or disagreements arise, they should be addressed through the Union's appropriate procedures rather than through public social media discussions.
6. The fact that a statement is made on a personal account does not remove potential legal liability.
7. Individuals remain personally responsible for the content they publish, share or endorse.

---

## Confidentiality

8. Confidential information obtained through involvement with the SNU must not be disclosed through social media.
9. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Internal discussions.
- Governance matters.
- Committee deliberations.
- Disciplinary proceedings.

- Complaints and investigations.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Personal information relating to members, volunteers, staff or students.
- Information subject to embargo or awaiting official publication.

10. Confidentiality obligations continue even where an individual has ceased to hold a position within the Union.

11. Before sharing information online, individuals should consider:

- Is the information public?
- Do I have permission to share it?
- Could publication cause harm or breach trust?
- Could publication breach data protection obligations?

12. Where uncertainty exists, information should not be published until clarification has been obtained.

---

## Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

13. The SNU is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful and welcoming environment for all.

14. Social media must not be used to engage in behaviour that could reasonably be regarded as discriminatory, intimidating, harassing or bullying.

15. This applies equally to official and personal accounts.

16. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Offensive or derogatory comments relating to race, ethnicity or nationality.
- Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Harassment relating to disability, age, religion or belief.
- Personal attacks, intimidation or threats.
- Sustained hostile behaviour directed towards an individual or group.
- Publishing content intended to humiliate, ridicule or demean others.

17. Behaviour that would be unacceptable in an SNU church, centre, committee meeting, classroom or workplace is equally unacceptable on social media.

18. The Union reserves the right to investigate and take appropriate action where online conduct appears inconsistent with its values, policies or standards of behaviour.

---

## Respecting Differences of Opinion

19. The SNU is a diverse organisation comprising individuals with a broad range of experiences, perspectives and theological viewpoints.
20. Respectful disagreement is both inevitable and healthy within any membership organisation.
21. Individuals should seek to discuss differences constructively and avoid language or behaviour that unnecessarily escalates conflict.
22. The aim should always be to promote understanding, dialogue and mutual respect, even where agreement cannot be reached.

---

## Accuracy and Accountability

23. Individuals should take reasonable steps to ensure that information they publish is accurate.
24. Rumour, speculation and unverified allegations should not be presented as fact.
25. Where mistakes are identified, they should be corrected promptly and transparently.
26. Accountability and honesty are essential to maintaining trust within the Union and with the wider public.

---

## Relationship with Other SNU Policies

27. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant SNU policies, procedures and codes of conduct.
28. These may include:

- Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Data protection and privacy policies.
- Staff disciplinary procedures.
- Volunteer policies.
- Student Codes of Conduct.
- Equality and diversity policies.
- Complaints procedures.
- Governance and committee regulations.

29. Compliance with this Social Media Policy does not remove the obligation to comply with any other applicable SNU policy or procedure.

30. Where there is any conflict between policies, advice should be sought from the appropriate officer before proceeding.

---

## A Final Reminder

31. Social media should be used in ways that strengthen trust, foster respectful dialogue and support the charitable aims of the Spiritualists 'National Union.

32. Individuals should always consider whether their online activity reflects the standards of conduct expected of someone associated with the Union.

33. Before posting, ask:

**"Would I be comfortable defending this content before the NEC, the Charity Commission, my church or centre, and the wider membership?"**

If the answer is uncertain, further consideration should be given before publishing.

# 10. Managing Community Engagement, Concerns and Problematic Behaviour

The Spiritualists' National Union seeks to foster social media environments that are welcoming, respectful, informative and reflective of the values of the organisation.

Our social media channels exist to support communication, engagement, education and the advancement of the Union's charitable purposes. They provide opportunities for members, students, volunteers and the wider public to engage with the work of the SNU, ask questions, share experiences and participate in discussion.

The Union recognises that social media is often one of the most visible public representations of the organisation and, as such, it has a responsibility to ensure that these spaces remain safe, respectful and constructive.

---

## Respectful Criticism, Debate and Member Engagement

The SNU recognises that members, volunteers, students, ministers, tutors and supporters will not always agree with decisions, policies, priorities or actions taken by the organisation.

Constructive criticism, respectful disagreement and open discussion are important features of a healthy membership organisation and can contribute positively to its development and improvement.

Nothing within this policy is intended to prevent individuals from:

- Expressing opinions.
- Asking questions.
- Raising concerns.
- Challenging decisions.
- Participating in robust discussion and debate regarding matters affecting the Union and its membership.

The Union welcomes engagement from members and values feedback offered in good faith.

However, all individuals are encouraged to exercise these rights responsibly and in a manner consistent with the values of the organisation.

As a registered charity, the SNU has a responsibility to advance its charitable purposes and promote the interests of the organisation, the religion of Spiritualism and the communities it serves.

Those engaging with the Union's social media platforms should therefore consider whether their contributions:

- Promote informed discussion and accountability.
- Encourage respectful dialogue.
- Assist in the positive development of the Union.
- Contribute to a welcoming and constructive environment.

Individuals should wherever possible:

- Raise concerns respectfully and factually.
- Focus criticism on issues, decisions or actions rather than individuals.
- Seek clarification before making assumptions.
- Utilise appropriate complaints, governance and feedback procedures where relevant.
- Engage in good faith with those who may hold different views.

The Union does not regard criticism in itself as problematic.

The purpose of moderation is not to suppress differing opinions, but to maintain an environment in which meaningful, respectful and constructive discussion can take place.

The Union also offers a variety of official channels to raise legitimate concerns, including:

- Direct communication with SNU Head Office
- At the Union's Annual General Meeting ('AGM')
- Via the Union's official complaints procedure

The above are the officially recommended ways in which members and the public are encouraged to raise legitimate concerns, issues and complaints.

Members and the public should also be aware that publicly disclosing details of existing complaints, investigations or similar on our social media channels may not only risk prejudicing any such processes, but may in and of itself constitute a breach.

---

## Official Information and Sources

Members and the public should be aware that official information regarding the SNU and Arthur Findlay College will only be issued through authorised channels.

Whilst unofficial pages, groups and individuals may discuss matters relating to the Union, such sources should not automatically be regarded as authoritative.

The most reliable source of information will always be official statements, publications, websites and social media channels issued by the SNU or AFC.

---

## When Moderation May Be Necessary

Whilst disagreement and debate are welcome, there may be occasions where intervention becomes necessary.

Moderation may be appropriate where content or behaviour is:

- Abusive, threatening or intimidating.
- Harassing, discriminatory or hateful.
- Deliberately misleading or knowingly false.
- Defamatory or potentially unlawful.
- In breach of safeguarding requirements.
- In breach of confidentiality obligations.
- In breach of copyright, data protection or other legal obligations.
- Persistently disruptive or inflammatory.
- Primarily intended to provoke conflict rather than meaningful discussion.
- Unrelated to the topic being discussed and repeatedly disruptive.
- Promotional, commercial or spam-related in nature.

The fact that an individual strongly disagrees with the Union or its leadership does not, in itself, justify moderation.

Moderation decisions should be based upon behaviour and conduct rather than viewpoint alone.

---

## Managing Concerns and Escalation

Those responsible for managing the Union's social media channels should exercise reasonable judgement when considering whether intervention is necessary.

Where appropriate, the preferred approach should be:

1. Encourage respectful engagement.
2. Provide clarification where appropriate.
3. Remove content that breaches this policy.
4. Issue reminders regarding acceptable standards of conduct.
5. Restrict participation where problematic behaviour persists.
6. Suspend or block users where behaviour presents an ongoing risk to the wellbeing of others, the effective operation of the platform or the reputation of the organisation.

Not every disagreement requires intervention.

Moderators should seek to distinguish between:

- Genuine criticism and abuse.

- Frustration and harassment.
- Disagreement and disruption.
- Accountability and personal attacks.

---

## Serious Concerns

Immediate intervention may be required where content:

- Creates safeguarding concerns.
- Encourages unlawful activity.
- Contains threats or intimidation.
- Reveals confidential information.
- Creates significant reputational risk.
- Exposes the Union to legal liability.

In such circumstances, content may be removed without prior warning and further action may be taken where appropriate.

---

## Consistency and Fairness

Moderation decisions should be guided by fairness, consistency and proportionality.

The objective should always be to maintain safe, respectful and productive online spaces whilst respecting the rights of individuals to express views, ask questions and participate in discussion.

The Union acknowledges that reasonable people will sometimes disagree.

Our aim is not to eliminate disagreement, but to ensure that it is expressed in a manner that reflects the values of respect, integrity and personal responsibility expected throughout the Spiritualists' National Union.

---

## A Final Reminder

Social media platforms are an important extension of the Union's public presence.

Every member, volunteer, student, Minister, tutor, trustee and supporter has a role to play in helping create online environments that are welcoming, informative and reflective of the best of Spiritualism.

Before posting, commenting or responding, consider:

**"Am I helping to improve understanding, promote respectful dialogue and support the positive future of the Union?"**

If the answer is yes, then your contribution is likely to be valuable.

## 11. Conclusion – Positive Engagement and Responsible Communication

Social media has transformed the way organisations, communities and individuals communicate with one another.

It provides unprecedented opportunities to share information, celebrate achievements, build relationships and engage with people who may never otherwise encounter the work of the Spiritualists' National Union or the religion of Spiritualism.

Used responsibly, social media can be a powerful force for education, connection, inspiration and community building.

The SNU wishes its social media platforms to be welcoming, informative and positive spaces that celebrate the work of our members, churches, centres, districts, committees, volunteers, students, tutors, Ministers and staff.

We encourage individuals to use social media to:

- Share positive news and achievements.
- Promote learning and understanding.
- Encourage respectful discussion.
- Celebrate the work of the Union and its affiliated bodies.
- Support and encourage others.
- Build constructive relationships within the Spiritualist community and beyond.

The Union also recognises that social media provides an important forum for discussion, feedback, accountability and the exchange of ideas.

Healthy organisations benefit from respectful challenge, constructive criticism and thoughtful debate. Nothing within this policy should be interpreted as preventing individuals from raising concerns, expressing opinions or engaging in legitimate discussion regarding matters affecting the Union.

At the same time, all individuals associated with the SNU share a responsibility to ensure that their online conduct reflects the values of respect, integrity, personal responsibility and kindness that underpin both the Union and the wider Spiritualist movement.

As a registered charity, the SNU has a duty to advance its charitable purposes and serve its members and the wider public. The way we communicate online can either support or undermine those objectives.

Every post, comment, image, video and interaction contributes to how the Union, its members and Spiritualism itself are perceived by others.

Before engaging online, individuals are encouraged to consider:

- Is my contribution accurate and respectful?
- Does it comply with safeguarding and legal requirements?
- Am I contributing constructively to the discussion?
- Does this reflect positively on myself, the Union and the wider Spiritualist movement?
- Would I be comfortable if this content remained publicly available indefinitely?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then the contribution is likely to support the values and objectives of the Union.

In accordance with the Seven Principles, the values of the Spiritualists' National Union and our responsibilities as a registered charity, we invite all those associated with the Union to use social media in a manner that is positive, respectful, inclusive and responsible.

By doing so, we can ensure that our online communities remain places of learning, encouragement, meaningful discussion and mutual respect, whilst continuing to promote and advance the work of the Spiritualists' National Union and the religion of Spiritualism for the benefit of present and future generations.

# Appendix A – Useful Contacts

## Communications and Social Media

**SNU Communications Officer - Kyle Pedley**
kyle.pedley@snu.org.uk

**SNU Operations Manager - Steve West**
steve.west@snu.org.uk

---

## Safeguarding

**SNU Safeguarding Manager - Gemma Faraway**
gemma.faraway@snu.org.uk

Safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance can be found at:

**www.snu.org.uk/safeguarding**

---

## Official SNU Resources

**Spiritualists' National Union Website**
www.snu.org.uk

**Arthur Findlay College Website**
www.arthurfindlaycollege.org

Members and the public should always refer to official SNU and AFC websites, publications and social media channels when seeking authoritative information regarding the organisation.