



Scottish Police Federation

5 Woodside Place Glasgow G3 7QF

JCC Circular 41 of 2018

Ref: CS/DJK/LS

19 September 2018

Attachments:

Dear Colleague

SPF Communications; Media Release & Social Media Policy – Information

I refer to the above and attach, herewith, the SPF Communications; Media Release & Social Media Policy for your information.

Yours sincerely

Calum Steele
General Secretary

SPF COMMUNICATIONS; MEDIA RELEASE & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Communications

Communication plays an essential role in the conduct of our business. How you communicate with people not only reflects on you as an individual but also on the organisation. We value your ability to communicate with colleagues which is key to dissemination of information to them. We trust you to do so appropriately.

All communications sent by or on behalf of the Scottish Police Federation (SPF) are governed by this policy and it applies to all forms of media including written, e-mail, newsletter and social media. The policy applies to all Full Time Office Bearers, Elected Representatives and Staff of the SPF.

All communications sent by whatever means by or on behalf of the SPF must have the approval of the Joint Central Committee (JCC) and the contents must at all times be in the best interests of the SPF and its members. Any summarising of an SPF policy or position (e.g. in a tweet) must be clearly linked to the original source documentation on the SPF website. The only exceptions to this approval process are communications sent by or on behalf of the officers of the JCC (General Secretary, Chair, Deputy General Secretary and Vice Chair).

All communications sent in the form of Circulars (JCC, Area Committee etc) if further circulated must be sent unaltered with their original format and content. Any caveat regarding further circulation of such documents must be strictly observed e.g, Not For Further Circulation must not be further circulated. This also applies to letters and e-mails which unless the permission of the author has been obtained should not be further circulated.

The provisions of the Data Protection Act apply to all communications and it is our collective responsibility to protect all personal data.

The conduct of all Full Time Office Bearers and Elected Representatives of the Scottish Police Federation is governed by Rule 13 of the Police Federation (Scotland) Rules and any breaches of this policy will dealt with in accordance with this rule and could in serious cases result in expulsion.

Media Releases

The vast majority of media inputs from SPF representatives will be from the officers of the JCC namely the, General Secretary, Chair, Deputy General Secretary and Vice Chair.

Occasionally, another SPF representative will be asked for a media comment and on such an occasion the following procedure should be followed:

1. Establish who the journalist is and where they are from.
2. Establish what the topic is and what they are looking for by way of an SPF input.
3. Before making any comment, contact an officer of the JCC. The officer of the JCC will provide guidance on how to proceed.
4. If, after receiving advice, you are to make a comment to the media, ensure you give your name and your position in the SPF. Do not ask to be identified only as a Federation spokesperson.

5. If, after receiving advice, you are to make a comment to the media and it is appropriate in the circumstances, contact Doug Keil on djkeil@spf.org.uk who will advise on previous SPF comment on the particular or related topic.
6. If, after receiving guidance, you make a media comment, contact Lesley on Lesley.stevenson@spf.org.uk and complete a media comment form.

Social Media

Definition of social media

For the purposes of this policy, social media are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video and image-sharing websites such as YouTube.

SPF representatives and staff (hereinafter in this part of the policy referred to as reps & staff) should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Reps & staff should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use. This part of the policy does not apply to officers of the JCC who are trained and authorised to speak on behalf of the SPF and who use Social Media for tactical communications.

Use of social media at work

Reps & staff are allowed to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites from the SPF's computers or devices, provided that this does not interfere with their duties.

The SPF understands that reps and staff may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops and palm-top and hand-held devices, to access social media websites while they are at work. Reps & staff must limit their use of social media on their own equipment to their official rest breaks such as their lunch break/times.

Excessive use of social media at work

Reps & staff should not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites. They should ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their other duties. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on productivity.

Monitoring use of social media during work time

The SPF reserves the right to monitor reps & staff internet usage, but will endeavour to inform an affected employee when this is to happen and the reasons for it. The SPF considers that valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been using social media websites when he/she should be working; or
- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy.

The SPF reserves the right to retain information that it has gathered on reps & staff use of the internet for a period of three years.

Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

Social media in your personal life

The SPF recognises that many reps & staff make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of the SPF, reps & staff must be aware that they can damage the SPF if they are recognised as being one of its reps & staff.

Reps & staff are allowed to say that they work for the SPF, which recognises that it is natural for its staff sometimes to want to discuss their work on social media. However, the reps & staff online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the SPF's name.

Use of identifiers SPF or Scottish Police Federation, Federation or Fed etc

Before making any communication in a professional capacity through social media using any of these or other identifiers reps & staff must:

- make sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the SPF;
- get permission from a national office bearer;
- get a colleague to check the content before it is published;
- Identify themselves by name and position held and not as a Federation spokesperson.

Any communications that reps & staff make in a professional capacity through social media must not:

bring the SPF into disrepute, for example by:

- criticising or arguing with members, supervisors, colleagues or rivals;
- making defamatory comments about individuals or the SPF or any of its committees or other bodies;
- posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
- subverting existing governance and communication procedures and protocols.

breach confidentiality, for example by:

- revealing confidential police material or information owned by the SPF;
- giving away confidential information about any individual ;
- discussing the SPF's internal workings (such as negotiations or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public).

breach copyright, for example by:

- using someone else's images or written content without permission;
- failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or

do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
- using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the SPF); or
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive [or links to such content].

Disciplinary action over social media use

All reps & staff are required to adhere to this policy. Reps & staff should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action under Rule 13 of the Police Federation (Scotland) Rules. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the SPF, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.