



Defence  
Children  
Services

# DCS Directive 7.1.3

## Social Media

DCS Sep 19 v1.0

## General

<b>Authorisation</b>	Director DCS
<b>Senior Responsible Owner</b>	Director DCS
<b>Point of Contact</b>	HQ Communications Team 01980 61 8858
<b>Review Date</b>	Sep 2021
<b>Related Policy/Guidance</b>	2016DIN03-029: Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public Defence Communications Strategy DDC Guide for Personnel Using Social Media Defence Digital Playbook 2012DIN05-005 The MOD Metadata Standard for imagery 2006DIN05-034 Policy on use of child photography for defence publicity The NSPCC photography and image sharing guidance. DCS Guidance on Social Media JSP 834:Safeguarding

## Introduction

1. Social media is a recognised medium for engagement and information exchange within DCS's stakeholder and customer base. To ensure the online safety of individuals, and in particular children attending our MOD schools, it is essential that all DCS personnel conduct themselves appropriately online and information is shared responsibly through social media.
2. DCS falls under the Directorate of Defence Communications (DDC) for primary policy on social media. All social media accounts and channels that DCS uses must be registered and moderated by DDC. Further detailed guidance is detailed in the DDC guidance: [Defence personnel on using social media sites](#) accessed on the GOV.UK website.

## Aim

3. The aim of this Directive is to provide direction and guidance on the appropriate usage of social media, including images (photographs and video). Detailed guidance is laid out at Annex B of this document.

## Scope

4. This Directive applies to all DCS personnel, inclusive of MOD schools/settings, and for all DCS authored social media content. Social media includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Blogs, for example Blogger;
  - b. 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter;
  - c. Online discussion forums such as netmums.com;
  - d. Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook;
  - e. Media sharing services, for example YouTube.

## Roles and Responsibilities

5. Contributors to social media must seek appropriate training in the use of social media before embarking on a campaign if they have no previous experience. Training for social media use in MOD schools/settings will be coordinated through HQ MOD Schools and advice and guidance is provided by HQ DCS Communications team. First level training for Social Media is available on Civil Service Learning.
6. All contributors are to read and understand
  - a. 2016DIN03-029: Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public;
  - b. MOD Online Engagement Guidelines;
  - c. The Defence Communications Strategy.
7. Where personnel are not able to access these publications, they will need to contact HQ DCS Communications team.
8. All DCS personnel should assume that anything they post is public so should ensure that they are professional, maintaining a clear distinction between their personal and professional lives. Contributors are responsible for sharing communications through social media responsibly and in accordance with MOD policy and this Directive.

## Principles

9. All official social media accounts and channels must be approved by HQ DCS Communications Branch prior to approval by DDC; they must have clearly defined outputs; be regularly maintained and evaluated and must comply with MOD policies for social media and communications.
10. All information shared through DCS official social media networks is subject to copyright, data protection and Safeguarding legislation and MOD policy. Use of social media within DCS **must** not:

- a. Bring the MOD into disrepute;
  - b. Breach confidentiality;
  - c. Breach copyright of any kind;
  - d. Breach any MOD policies (diversity and inclusion; misconduct, bullying and harassment; data protection, safeguarding);
  - e. Be used to discuss or advise on any matters relating to DCS or MOD matters, personnel, pupils or parents;
  - f. Harass, bully or be discriminatory in any way;
  - g. Be defamatory or derogatory.
11. When using social media, DCS personnel must:
- a. Never share work login details or passwords;
  - b. Always keep personal phone numbers private.
12. And in particular MOD school/setting staff must:
- a. Never give personal email addresses to pupils or parents;
  - b. Restrict access to certain groups of people on their social media sites and pages;
  - c. Not interact with any ex-pupil under the age of 18 on social networking sites.
13. When using personal social media networks, DCS staff must not:
- a. Identify themselves as an employee of the MOD and should be aware that their out-of-work activity may detrimentally affect the MOD's reputation;
  - b. Have any pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with.

## Accounts, Channels and Platforms

14. All Defence Social Media accounts and channels **must** be official. DCS has an account which allows the Directorate to run its official channels, on which it can publish content using **only** the platforms below:
- a. **Facebook:** one platform for DCS is managed by the HQ Communications team and one per MOD school/setting to be managed at school/setting level in accordance with MOD direction and guidance and this Directive;
  - b. **Twitter:** where there is a clear requirement for a MOD school/setting/HQ DCS to have more than one twitter account; this should be articulated when setting up the account. For example, a school may find benefit in having department level twitter accounts; individual branches within HQ DCS may find benefit in having a branch twitter account. It is important that, as for all social media accounts, twitter accounts have a clear requirement.

15. Where there is no clear requirement for MOD schools/settings and DCS branches to have individual platforms and where content can be posted on DCS's central platforms, schools and branches are encouraged to email content to HQ DCS Communications Team for inclusion on HQ Facebook and/or Twitter.

16. **Setting up.** Personnel who wish to have an official social media presence will need to first contact HQ DCS Communications Branch. Once the application process has been completed and DDC has provided approval, DDC will set up an account or channel. Channels are only official when accessible by DDC.

17. **Closing Channels.** DDC may close the account for the following reasons:

- a. There is no registered contact/owner;
- b. The site is not maintained on a regular basis;
- c. No evaluation is provided;
- d. Not maintaining contact with DDC;
- e. Organisational changes;
- f. Ongoing failure to meet planned objectives for social media.

18. **Instagram:** Instagram is not recommended due to its primary purpose of sharing images and the strict controls placed upon the use of images, in particular those of children and young people, by Defence.

19. DCS personnel **must** not to set up an official account or channel themselves and **must** not establish a channel on a platform without approval from HQ DCS.

20. A platform contains the social media content that is being shared. Where DCS personnel wish to establish a public social media channel, they must:

- a. Discuss the proposition with their Line Manager;
- b. Secure approval from HQ DCS Communications Team;
- c. HQ DCS Communications Team will provide the appropriate approval form to enable personnel to establish a channel.

## Photography and Imagery Sharing

21. Consent must always be given prior to posting images on social media. Contributors must ensure that the owner of the image understands what the image will be used for and where the image will appear. For the use of child photography and imagery within DCS, the consent form at Annex A must be used.

22. It is important that all imagery posted on DCS authorised social media meets the Defence standard; personnel are therefore directed to follow 2012DIN05-005: The MOD Metadata Standard for imagery.

23. There are specific regulations for the use of child photography for defence publicity and all contributors must ensure that they have appropriate consent and official permissions. Defence policy for the use of photography must be followed and is accessed at 2006DIN05-034: Policy on use of child photography for defence publicity.

24. **MOD schools/settings.** Specific recommendations<sup>1</sup> for MOD schools/settings are detailed below:

- a. Only using a first name where a name is associated with an image of a child;
- b. Never publishing personal information about individual children;
- c. Ensuring that children and their parents/carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long;
- d. Only using images of children in appropriate clothing;
- e. Avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming;
- f. Using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

25. Where children themselves, parents/carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at MOD school/setting events and the images are for personal use, HQ MOD Schools will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes and/or announce details of the policy laid out in this Directive, before the start of the event. This includes:

- a. Reminding parents/carers and children that they need to give consent for DCS to take and use images of children;
- b. Asking for photos taken during the event not to be shared on social media;
- c. Recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share;
- d. Reminding children, parents and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

26. MOD schools/settings may use photography and filming as an aid in activities such as music or drama - children/young people and their parents/carers must be made aware that this is part of the programme and will need to provide written consent.

---

<sup>1</sup> NSPCC guidance on photography and image sharing.

## Storing images

27. Photographs and videos of children which are maintained as records **must** be stored securely, in accordance with Defence Policy for Safeguarding: JSP 834 and the Data Protection Act 18.
28. Hard copies of images **must** be kept in a locked drawer and electronic images in a protected folder with restricted access. Images will be stored for a period of 2 years.
29. Images of children **must** never be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.
30. DCS does not permit staff and volunteers to use any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children for official use. Only cameras or devices belonging to the Directorate should be used.

# Annex A – Photography/Imagery Consent Form

Defence Childrens Services

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX School/Setting

## CONSENT FORM

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

At [school/setting name], we occasionally take photographs of pupils. We may use these images in the school's prospectus, in other printed publications and on display boards around the school. We may also use them on the school's website and official social media.

If we use photographs of individual pupils, we will not use the full name of the child in the accompanying text or photo caption. If a child has won an award and the parent would like the full name of their child to accompany their picture, we will obtain permission from the parent before using the image.

To comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) / Data protection Act (DPA) 2018 we need your permission before we can take photographs or make any recordings of your child. You may find it useful to consult with your child about whether they give consent for their photograph to be used so that the answers below reflect their views, particularly when they are over the age of 13.

Please answer the questions below, then sign and date the form where shown and return the form to the school.

Please circle your answer

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| I give permission for my child's image to be used in the school prospectus   | Yes / No |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used in other printed publications that we produce for promotional and marketing purposes | Yes / No |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used on the school website  | Yes / No |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used on internal display boards   | Yes /No  |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used on the school Facebook page  | Yes /No  |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used on the school Twitter page   | Yes / No |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used on the DCS Facebook page   | Yes /No  |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used on the DCS Twitter page  | Yes / No |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used in MOD publications  | Yes / No |
| I give permission for my child's image being published with a press photograph   | Yes / No |
| I give permission for my child's image to be used [insert other uses of photos here, or delete this]                                   | Yes / No |

You can withdraw your consent at any time, by emailing [email address], calling the school [phone number], or in person by coming in to the school office.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent or Carer) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Carer Name \_\_\_\_\_

School/Setting Address.....

*This page is deliberately blank*

## Annex B – Guidance on the use of Social Media

### Posting on social media

31. Guidance on the appropriate use of social media is laid out in the MOD's Social Media Playbook, DCS Guide to Social Media and highlighted here:

- a. Social media posts should be written in simple, clear, jargon free English;
- b. Posts must always be politically and diplomatically neutral;
- c. Always apply the MOD's Values & Standards;
- d. Contributors will need to keep their social media pages up to date and will need review them at regular intervals (at least monthly) and update when necessary;
- e. Clarify the potential risks of a social media campaign before embarking on it;
- f. Every post should support DCS's mission and outputs;
- g. Be aware of suspicious links / phishing;
- h. It is the responsibility of the account holder to evaluate the effectiveness of the channel;
- i. No one should be tagged on an official post without their consent as this may breach the Data Protection Act 2018;
- j. Do not engage in heated debate and negative posts;
- k. Do not attempt to respond to negative comments or issues without firstly following the community moderation workflow (DDC document), available from DCS HQ Communications team.

### Platforms

32. **Twitter.** When using Twitter, it is important to:

- a. Use sharp, clear high-quality images, up to 4 images can be used per tweet;
- b. Ensure that all videos and images can be viewed on a mobile device;
- c. Schedule Tweets;
- d. Ensure that each 'tweet' stands alone;
- e. Use Hashtags (#) and @ tags to generate engagement, check to ensure the correct Hashtag is being used **before** it is tweeted. Use up to 3 # or a combination of 3 # and @ for greater engagement, to generate connections and conversations and to look for influencers;
- f. Monitor replies and answer questions within 24 hours of posting;

- g. Retweet content and reply to tweets to maintain a robust twitter presence but be aware that retweets reflect back on the organisation and should align with its purpose and values.
  - h. Speak to the DDC Digital Team if a 'tweet' needs reporting or removing.
  - i. Note that deleted tweets will remain a live thread on social media.
33. **Facebook.** When using Facebook, it is important to:
- a. Use sharp high-quality images or videos, add description to images to help with Facebook searches and search engine results;
  - b. Use the 'Slideshow' feature available in the publishing toolkit when using more than 4 photographs;
  - c. Use short text descriptions - although there are no limits to the number of characters, posts with long text descriptions are rarely seen;
  - d. Use influencers to maximise reach e.g. @DCS;
  - e. Schedule posts;
  - f. Monitor responses for 24 hours;
  - g. Respond to people with genuine queries.

## Training

*The social media training plan is to follow.*