Social Media Tips for Bands

Technology has been responsible for helping us share, learn and communicate more effectively. Use of social media platforms like Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp has led a range of benefits, but with that has come inevitable issues.

Two common issues include:

- Cyberbullying - the use of digital technology to threaten, menace, harass, and humiliate an individual or group. Cyberbullying may look like online racism, targeted threats, intimidation of fellow band members and members of other bands, conductors and administrators, defaming of adjudicators, Band management, State Governing Body management and volunteers, or unsubstantiated claims of drug-taking or favouritism. Cyberbullying is a very real problem, and there is a need to explicitly educate members on the dangers of both online abuse and acting appropriately online. Where issues arise and a young person under 18 years is the target, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner can help. The Office works closely with social media partners to remove serious cyberbullying from the internet.

- Image-based abuse - known colloquially as 'revenge porn' or the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, is another harmful online activity which can affect members. The Office of the eSafety Commissioner will provide assistance to individuals who have been subjected to image-based abuse.

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides a good overview of all common social media issues, including:

- cyberbullying
- image based abuse
- cyber abuse
- offensive or illegal content
- sexting
- unwanted contact
- social engineering
- social networking

Tips for Bands and Committees

Band committees that are prepared and proactive can effectively manage social media issues. Social media issues can arise on a few different fronts. This may include behaviour on social media sites that you manage, or member behaviour on other social media sites, or even behaviour by others, directed at your band/members.

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Here's some advice for social media management at your band:

1. Policies and rules

All bands need policies in place to manage issues that arise on social media. The purpose is to set out how you expect members to behave and how you will deal with issues that may arise. They also provide a framework on how to use social media and how to deal with issues.

You can either develop a specific policy, such as a social media policy, or you may have existing policies that cover these areas such as:

- Member Protection Policy (MPP);
- Codes of Conduct;
- Child Protection Policy;
- Photography and image policy;
- Social media policy, and
- Disciplinary rules and processes, as set out in the Band / Association rules.

In the first instance, check with the BANSW for guidance. Existing band rules, like the MPP, should cover member behaviour on social media. For example, a derogatory remark made at a contest by a member to a volunteer, would be dealt with in the same way as if that remark was made by the member on Facebook, directed at the same official.

Laws can also apply in this area. Read more on the Office of the eSafety Commissioner's website.

2. Monitoring

Appoint someone at your band to monitor the social media sites your band is responsible for. You'll also need a contact person for members who have a concern. Both these roles can be set out in your policy. Social media and technology is rapidly changing, so make sure you appoint people in this area who actively use social media and are across the trends.

3. Reporting and response

It is important bands have a clear reporting process, respond to issues promptly and have offensive material removed. How you do this can be set out in your policy. Here are a few important considerations:

- Collecting information – prior to having material removed or reported, you should collect information/evidence. The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides advice on how to do this.

Removing and/or reporting material - as a first step, bands can:
- Remove material, where you manage the site (e.g., delete the post);

- Request the member to remove it, when on another site (eg. member posts video to YouTube), and
- Request another organisation/site owner remove the material (eg. non-member posts negative remarks about your band to another bands Facebook page)

For serious issues of cyber bullying of persons under the age of 18 years or instances of image based abuse, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner in Australia can also help, with advice on how to report incidents to social media service or the Offices' complaints service itself.

- <u>Image-based abuse</u>, and
- <u>Cyberbullying</u>

Illegal activity or matters of serious concern, such as child protection, should be reported to the relevant authorities immediately. Documentation of the issue and follow up must be undertaken by the band as part of its record keeping system.

4. Education

Bands should be proactive and let members know what behaviour you expect on social media by:

- Briefing volunteers including committee, conductors, tutors and others in meetings and inductions;
- Explain your bands policy and how to contact children and young people - in a child-friendly way. This might include face-to-face talks, or child-friendly signs at your venue (e.g., simple tick and cross for examples of good and bad social media use);
- Make information available on your website, Facebook pages, newsletters, and so on, and
- Bring policies to life in an interesting way – put a few points in your weekly newsletters, or emails about expected standards for social media use at your band.

Social Media Tips for Conductors and Tutors

As a conductor/tutor in a band you will be in a unique situation where you will be connected to members and parents. Conductors/tutors are also often in the role of an influencer to the many different groups. It is important how you use social media but also how you liaise, interact and observe all members of your band, both in and out of the band room.
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- Be familiar with and uphold your bands policies in relation to social media.
- Understand expected conduct and appropriate use.
- Understand what to do if issues arise.
- Understand how to report concerns.
- The appropriate Code of Conduct applies online as it would "in the band room".
- As you would outline to members expected "in the band room" behaviour, talk to them about respectful and appropriate conduct on social media.

- Model good online behaviour.

Conductors / tutors and online connection with players/parents

- Avoid connecting with players and parents online through personal social media accounts. It is recommended to communicate and connect on a professional account. This should also be documented in the band policy.
- If you have set up a specific online communications tool, such as group app, then it should be monitored by the one of the President, secretary, or, member protection officer.
- Set guidelines for use of the group app. and identify who is the moderator(s).
- Establish consequences for a breach of appropriate use

Tips for Members

Many members have active social media accounts. Some have professional and personal sites, while some use the one platform for both. It is important to remember that anything posted on social media sites may become public, even if they have strong privacy settings. Members should be aware of the positives and risks that social media can create and use the technology to enhance their brand rather than to put their professional online presence at risk.

- Be familiar with and uphold your Bands policies in relation to social media:
- Understand expected conduct and appropriate use;
- Understand what to do if issues arise, and
- Understand how to report concerns
- Members should evaluate the content (text, image or video) that they place on their social media sites or platforms to ensure it portrays them in a positive manner.
- Codes of Conduct apply online as they would "in the band room".

Social Media Policy

Despite the seemingly unregulated nature of social media, the law still applies online. Postings online are subject to the law in areas like defamation, racial discrimination, intimidation, breach of copyright and trademark infringement.

If someone at your band made inflammatory comments over the phone or sent a derogatory email, which came to the bands attention and contravened your code of conduct or behavioural guidelines, you would need to look at it and address it. The same applies to social media.

All bands should have a Social Media Policy that promotes guidelines for responsible social media use and outlines how offensive or discriminatory comments will be dealt with and disciplined if appropriate. The real effect of a social media policy is to let all your members know their rights and responsibilities in any social media forum, including if they make comments or posts that contradict your bands code of behaviour or conduct.