SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme | 2027

Purpose

This policy outlines expectations for the appropriate use of social media* by participants of the Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme.

* The term social media covers a multitude of digital software applications, including but not exclusively social networking (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, BeReal), messaging apps (e.g. Snapchat, WhatsApp, Messenger) blogging (e.g. Blogger and WordPress), multi-media sharing (e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest), information sharing (e.g. Wikipedia), review and opinion sites (e.g. Trip Advisor, Google My Business), and forums (e.g. Reddit). The absence or lack of explicit reference to a specific social media platform does not limit the extent of this policy.

1. General Guidelines

1. Participants must always use social media responsibly and respectfully.

2. Online content should reflect the values of the exchange programme: to share perspectives, make new friends and build connections around the world.

3. Participants are ambassadors of the Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme and are expected to represent their community positively.

2. Privacy and Safety

1. Do not publicly share personal information either whilst hosting, or during your visit (e.g. home address, phone number, school details, or any other confidential information).

2. Obtain consent before posting photos or videos of others, including host families, fellow participants, or programme staff.

3. Avoid tagging locations in real-time to protect personal safety.

3. Respect and Cultural Sensitivity

1. Be mindful of cultural differences and avoid posting content that could be considered offensive or insensitive.

2. Refrain from making political, religious, or controversial statements.

3. Celebrate diversity and promote mutual understanding.

4. Content Sharing

1. Sharing positive experiences and educational activities is encouraged.

2. Tag us and use official hashtags when posting programme-related content - @anborough #SisterCities27

3. Participants are personally responsible for any content they publish, share or interact with on social media and must be aware of how this might appear to others, knowing they are part of the Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme.

4. Do not publish, share or interact with content that includes drugs, alcohol or any illegal or inappropriate behaviour.

5. When using social media, remember that what you publish or engage with will be public for a long time and can't be retracted. Even if content is removed, it may have already been saved and/or forwarded around the world and can still be visible.

6. Be aware of how your social media activity, past or present, could harm the reputation of the Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme.

7. Do not publish, share or engage with content that is discriminatory against any individual or group, including content which:

    - bullies, harasses or intimidates any individual or organisation
    - is unlawful, libellous, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
    - uses hate speech or conspiracy theories which could be damaging to any community
    - infringes or violates someone else's rights
    - violates the law

8. Do not disclose any information that is confidential to the Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme or disclose personal data or information about any

other individuals involved.

5. Interaction and Conduct

1. Engage respectfully with comments and messages.
2. Do not engage in arguments or negative discussions online.
3. Report any online bullying, harassment, or inappropriate content to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Officers immediately.

6. Consequences of Misuse

1. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the programme.
2. Serious violations may be reported to relevant authorities or guardians.

7. Agreement

By signing the 'Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme Participant Responsibility Agreement', participants agree to follow this guidance.