

# VR031 Social Media Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Vegan Runners is a large running club with members across the UK and beyond. Social media is one of many forms of communication used in the club to keep in contact and share information from the club, and for members to interact with other local and national members.

### Purpose of this policy

This policy has been developed to inform our club members and volunteers about using social media so people feel enabled to participate, while being mindful of their responsibilities and obligations. In particular, this policy provides practical guidance allowing all parties to benefit from the use of social media, while minimising potential risks and protecting those involved. This policy aims to facilitate the promotion of Vegan Runners UK (VRUK) ethos, values and purpose through our social media content and practices.

### Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all adult club volunteers, club members, and non-members who administer and/or use any VRUK official social media accounts. The policy provides guidance and standards for all involved in VRUK social media, including the management of VRUK official social media accounts; standards for club volunteers when interacting with club members on any VRUK official social media accounts, including when using their personal social media accounts on behalf of the club; and expectations and recommendations for club members (and non-members) when using VRUK official social media accounts.

Vegan Runners UK does not currently accept individual members aged under 18 years old. However, children can join the club as part of a household membership with their parents or people who have parental responsibility. Social media guidelines related to child members is not currently covered by this policy.

Content that is intended for third party communications such as VRUK publicly available web pages, Twitter and all other means of public facing communication are not covered by this Policy.

We are not able to monitor or regulate wider social media, including club member's personal social media pages, or any accounts that are not VRUK official social media

accounts. Content on these pages is outside of our control. If something inappropriate or offensive appears outside of VRUK official social media accounts, individuals should consider any of the following:

- a. Report the content to the social media provider/group moderator/police
- b. Be an ally for those who may not have a voice
- c. Block/unfollow/unfriend the individual
- d. Inform the Club Secretary if the offensive content is public and could bring the club into disrepute.

## 2. Managing Vegan Runners UK official social media accounts

There are a number of VRUK official social media accounts, including (but not limited to) on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Strava. Vegan Runners UK online presence through our official social media accounts will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Vegan Runners UK will make every reasonable effort to ensure content on our official social media accounts reflects our aims and values as a club.
- Official social media accounts will be clearly identifiable to social media users in a number of ways:
  - They will contain the Vegan Runners UK logo
  - They will contain a link to the website ([www.veganrunners.org.uk](http://www.veganrunners.org.uk))
  - They will contain a link to the VRUK Social Media Policy
  - They will state 'Group by Vegan Runners UK'
- All VRUK official social media accounts will be password protected, and have at least two administrators and/or moderators to ensure:
  - consistent monitoring and moderating of content, and
  - maintenance of standards in line with current best practice on safe use of social media platforms, and
  - content is in keeping with VRUK ethos and policies, and
  - to ensure VRUK's continued ownership and management of all official social media accounts as local volunteers change over time.
- Volunteers who administer or moderate VRUK official social media accounts should be current club members. Administrators and moderators who are no longer club members should step down from their role as soon as practically possible.
- National Facebook Groups will have one Administrator: the Vegan Runners UK Page, along with Moderators who agree with this policy.
- Facebook Groups related to specific areas/regions will have two Administrators: the Vegan Runners UK Page, and the relevant Regional Vegan Runners Page (or in the absence of a regional page the relevant Regional Representative), along with Moderators who agree with this policy.

- New VRUK official Facebook groups will be agreed in line with VRUK social media strategy, and will be set up through the Vegan Runners UK page. Members who identify a need for a new group should contact the Club Secretary.
- All VRUK official WhatsApp Accounts will be included in a VRUK official WhatsApp community.
- Members joining a VRUK official WhatsApp community do so in the knowledge that their telephone number will be visible to all other community members, and by joining agree to this.
- Volunteers who manage VRUK official social media accounts will seek advice from other club volunteers as required, including (but not limited to) advice from the club's designated Welfare Officer on safeguarding issues, and advice from the club's Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Secretary on inclusion issues.
- Administrators and moderators will be made known to relevant club members so they are aware of who to contact if they have any concerns about VRUK official social media account activity.
- Administrators and moderators will address or remove inappropriate posts on VRUK official social media accounts, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected.
- Any club members who are unhappy with the decision of the VRUK official social media account Administrators should discuss their concerns with the Club Secretary (contact details can be found at the end of the policy).
- Where possible, VRUK official social media accounts, pages and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only approved members can see their content.
- Identifying details such as (but not limited to) a club member's home address or telephone number may not be posted on social media platforms.
- We may at times post photographs or videos from events of people in Vegan Runners kit. Any individual wishing for their image to be removed from VRUK official social media accounts should contact any moderator or administrator of the particular social media account.

### 3. Online Behaviours

The code of conduct (<https://www.veganrunners.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/VR002-Code-of-Conduct-.docx>) states the expected behavioural standards of VRUK members, this includes behaviour on VRUK official social media accounts. Here are some things to consider before posting on VRUK official social media:

- Pause and think about what you are saying and the impact it might have.
- Be respectful. You are personally responsible for what you post. If in doubt, don't post it.
- Think about your image – 'what do I want people to think about me or my club?'

- Consider who you are interacting with - you may come into contact online with under 18s. Familiarise yourself with safeguarding regulations in relation to engaging with under 18s (e.g. <https://www.englandathletics.org/welfare/safeguarding/>)
- Remember many different audiences may see your posts including club members, potential members, children, member's relatives, and friends.
- Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and your privacy settings. Additionally, members may wish to consider using appropriate privacy settings on their personal social media accounts.
- Don't post content that discriminates against individuals or groups on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- Consider whether your posts or messages are likely to cause offence.
- Don't write anything on social media channels that you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing in a newspaper or hearing on TV. Everything you write is treated as a direct quote i.e. 'Don't tweet what you wouldn't say to your mum/gran' or 'Think before you tweet' or 'Would I say this face to face with someone?'
- Don't speak negatively about other club members, competitors, officials or governing bodies. Never use slurs, personal insults or obscenity. Be professional and respectful.
- Be in the right state of mind when you make a post. Don't post when you're angry, upset, or your judgement is impaired in any way. Be very careful what you say, do, and post because once it's on a social media channel, it can go viral very quickly.
- Avoid engaging in on-line disputes.
- Adhere to the community standards laid out by the social media platform you are posting on.
- We expect all club members to act as ambassadors for VRUK, especially when wearing club kit and/or at public events, which includes posting things on social media which could bring the club into disrepute.

#### **4. What we expect from our club volunteers**

- Volunteers will be made aware of this policy and should behave in accordance with it.
- Volunteers should seek the advice of the designated Welfare Officer if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Volunteers are encouraged to communicate with members via official social media accounts or email accounts wherever practically possible.
- Volunteers should maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using VRUK official social media accounts.
- Emails or other formal messages sent on behalf of the club will maintain the club's tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would

communicate in a professional setting, avoiding kisses (X's) or using slang or inappropriate language.

- Volunteers may not delete any messages or communications sent to or from VRUK official social media accounts. All these communications belong to VRUK and not the individual sending them on behalf of the club.
- Volunteers who Administer and Moderate VRUK official social media accounts will be offered training by the club. Administrators and Moderators will be required to have a basic knowledge of the social media platforms and how to report or remove inappropriate content online, either through VRUK internal training or through their prior knowledge and experience.
- Any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our safeguarding procedure.

## **5. What we expect of club members, and non-members who use VRUK official social media accounts**

- Members and non-members who use VRUK social media accounts should be aware of this social media policy and the behaviours set out.
- We expect members behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in the code of conducts and anti-bullying statement.
- Members should take the necessary steps to protect themselves online.

## **6. Policy breach**

Club members who breach this policy (and other related policies) will face a warning in the first instance, persistent breaches will be dealt with through the club's Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.

Non-club members who use our official social media accounts who breach this policy will face a warning in the first instance, persistent breaches may result in removal from VRUK official social media account(s).

Any breaches of a safeguarding nature will be addressed through the club's safeguarding policy and procedure.

Whilst the club will try to the best of its ability to moderate social media posts, if you do have any concerns or would like to make a complaint, please contact the Club Secretary.

## **7. Related policies and procedures**

- VR002 Code of Conduct
- VR019 Welfare Policy – including our anti-bullying statement
- VR027 Inclusion Policy

## 8. Useful contacts

- Club Welfare Officer – [welfare@veganrunners.org.uk](mailto:welfare@veganrunners.org.uk)
- Club Secretary - [club.secretary@veganrunners.org.uk](mailto:club.secretary@veganrunners.org.uk)
- UKA - 07920 532552 / [safeguarding@uka.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@uka.org.uk)
- EA - [welfare@englandathletics.org](mailto:welfare@englandathletics.org)
- NSPCC Helpline - 0808 800 5000
- Childline - 0800 1111 / [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- The UK Safer Internet Centre - <https://saferinternet.org.uk/>
- Anti-Bullying Alliance - [www.antibullyingalliance.org](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org)