

Suggestions for Group rules on social media

We encourage Groups to use the [Knowledge Hub](#) online platform as a way of communicating with members, but we know that some Groups use other social media platforms to promote what they do.

Social media spaces like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are open platforms and places we have no control over. We suggest that Groups have clear rules for people engaging in these spaces so that discussions remain relevant and there is a means of protecting Group volunteers from any form of social media abuse. Some ideas are set out below.

1. Pinned statements

You can set a pinned statement which appears at the top of your social media space. Here you can have a short statement about how you expect users to engage. For example

CifA is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for its staff, and for anyone interacting in and with CifA. We will not accept negative comments on posts directed at individual personal experiences of our staff and volunteers, and will remove anything we believe breaches our [dignity and respect policy](#). We welcome constructive criticism but ask members to raise these through the appropriate channels.

2. Rules for joining

Facebook has an option to provide a set of rules for members of a group to adhere to. These are on the 'About tab' on the Facebook group page. It is recommended that all CifA groups are set up so that members have to agree to these rules when joining. Having rules means that any poor behaviour can be acted on and reported to the Facebook group admins, and if necessary people can be removed from a group. We also suggest you have an agreed process for doing this so any admins can act on it without delay.

We suggest your rules should include

- Please keep topics relevant to the nature of the Group
As a CifA group, we have specific aims which can be read on our group webpage on the CifA website. Please make sure you post is relevant to the group.
- Abide by the CifA Code of conduct
As a CifA group platform, we require everyone in this group to abide by the rules in CifA's Code of conduct. The Code is available on the CifA website.
- Be kind and courteous
We're here together to create a welcoming, supportive environment. Let's treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness is required.
- No hate speech or bullying
Everyone should feel safe. Bullying of any kind isn't allowed. Degrading comments about things such as race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, or identity will not be tolerated and result in instant removal from the group.
- No promotions or spam
This is a forum for discussion, support and advice. Please do not post spam or commercial promotions. Spam posters will be deleted from the group.
- Explain your post

Please explain your post if you are resharing. This helps contextualise and it is great way to hear from members!

- Be patient

CifA groups are run by volunteers. Replies to issue or queries may take longer than expected. Please respect the volunteers and other group members during your communications on the group.

Group administrations will delete posts or remove members from the group if we believe these rules have been broken.

Some people will be members of your group for years and so may not come across your rules and other key info for some time. Schedule the occasional reminder of the group rules so members are informed of what is acceptable behaviour for your group or create a pinned post so the rules remain permanently visible at the top of the page.

3. Page disclaimer

We ask all CifA groups to add the following disclaimer to social media platforms

This page/group is linked to the CifA xxxxxx Group. The website is managed by the CifA xxxxxx Group committee, who are all doing so on a voluntary basis. Group committee members seek to ensure that the information published is up to date and accurate. This account represents the views and ideas of members of the group (unless otherwise stated) and are not necessarily representative of CifA.

4. How to handle negative comments

Stay calm and professional. Responding with anger or frustration can escalate the situation so maintain a calm and professional tone if you are engaging. Remember you are acting as a volunteer of CifA, and you are expected to abide by the Code of conduct yourself in your communications and replies.

If you need to respond, acknowledge without engaging or encouraging. Briefly acknowledge the comment without getting into a debate. For example, "Thank you for your feedback. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, you can contact CifA staff via admin@archaeologists.net.

Set boundaries with your replies. Politely but firmly state that abusive or inappropriate comments are not acceptable. For example, "We encourage constructive feedback, but we do not tolerate abusive language."

Report and block. Use the platform's tools to report the abusive behaviour and remove the user from the group if necessary.

Document the comments and seek support. Keep records any negative interactions, and pass these on to CifA for advice. We can provide additional support and guidance.

Promote positive engagement. Encourage positive interactions by highlighting constructive comments and engaging with supportive followers. It can be easy to focus on the negative comments, but remember those people are the minority. Focus on the friendly comments and encourage people who engage positively with your pages.

Take a break from social media. Step away and give yourself a social media break. Ask another member to take over the page admin for a period of time, or you can pause your group if you need a break from maintaining it

5. Statements on behalf of the Institute

Please remember that the Group regulations do not allow Groups to make statements on behalf of the Institute without first seeking agreement from the Board of Directors (paragraph 11). If you do wish to agree a statement, contact Alex (Alex.Llewellyn@archaeologists.net).

6. If you experience any social media harassment, share how you feel about it.

If you're facing harassment on social media, it's important to express how you're feeling. It might be tempting to dismiss it as "just Facebook" or "only a troll," but the emotional impact is real. It's completely normal to feel frustrated, isolated, or anxious about negative comments. Remember, online life is very much real life too. If you're feeling stressed, reach out to someone for support.

Additional resources include

[How to report abuse on Facebook](#)

[Cybersmile Foundation - Dealing with cyberbullying and online abuse as an adult](#)

[Brown University - Managing Online and Social Media Harassment](#)

You are encouraged to reach out to CifA for advice and further guidance about negative social media comments via groups@archaeologists.net