



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY 2021

ACT Rescue and Foster (ARF) Inc. is an incorporated non-profit association of people in Canberra (Australia) and the surrounding region who rescue dogs from euthanasia and foster them temporarily in our own homes for as long as it takes to find them loving, permanent homes.

ARF Objects

To save and improve the lives of dogs in the Canberra region as well as in surrounding regions, including metropolitan and regional Sydney by:

- rescuing and rehoming as many unwanted dogs as possible
- educating the community about responsible dog companionship
- working with local pounds to help achieve, develop and implement "minimum destruction" policies and procedures
- establishing and developing networks of communication for people involved in rescue and rehoming dogs.

Our Social Media Policy

ARF's Social Media Policy is to:

- support ARF's Objects
- help maintain consistency and transparency in the day-to-day operations of the organisation as well as in its policy development
- maintain the integrity of the ARF Brand

Our Social Media Strategy

We will use a range of social media, including:

- Three Facebook (FB) pages:
 - a public Facebook for promotional material, for public release of ARF statements and for responding to enquiries from the public
 - an internal FB called Volunteers Facebook and
 - an internal ARF Community Facebook for ARF members and supporters.
- Instagram

Facebook

Currently FB is by far the dominant social media medium utilised by ARF. As such greater detail has been provided in this policy on FB use. Should other mediums grow in importance this policy will be reviewed by the ARF Committee.

All social media will function as follows.

ARF members authorised by the Committee to post on ARF social media and respond to enquiries are listed at Attachment A.

ARF Public FB

ARF uses Facebook to promote available foster dogs on the ARF website and assessed dogs in our local pounds that are looking for a home. It is also used to share promotional material, for public release of ARF statements, and for responding to enquiries from the public.

ARF Volunteers FB

The Volunteers FB is an invaluable resource for volunteers and foster carers who can use it to share information and photos and freely discuss a wide range of subjects within the private group.

However, it is not a substitute for seeking official approval for a dog, nor for placing a dog on the ARF website with photo and write up.

Foster carers and other volunteers are registered to use this form of internal communication and the administrators will make regular checks to ensure that those registered continue to be eligible to use this FB.

Where the administrators see a potential problem arising – for example, personal arguments – the post or comment may be removed, the Committee will be notified, and the members involved advised on the key principles of FB use.

ARF Community Facebook

ARF Community Facebook offers all members a safe place to post photos of their dogs, ask questions, share successes and 'failures', and to feel that they are part of the ARF community. It is a place for all members to post their thoughts, to have discussions and to get to know their fellow members a little better. It is a place to talk about community events such as ARF monthly walks, ARF Christmas Party and other community minded events organised throughout the year.

Instagram

ARF also uses Instagram to promote available foster dogs on the ARF website and assessed dogs in our local pounds that are looking for a home. As such the above advice in relation to FB functioning should be applied to Instagram.

Communication Subcommittee (CSC)

The Communication Subcommittee has day to day oversight for the implementation of ARF's Social Media Policy and will report regularly to the ARF Committee on its implementation. Any suggested amendments to the policy must be submitted to the ARF Committee for decision.

Key principles for social media use by ARF members

ARF members authorised to use ARF's social media as a communication tool must familiarise themselves with the key principles for its use (see below).

All those with administrator and editor access to ARF social media will:

- read and apply the Key Principles as outlined in ARF's Social Media Policy
- not amend or remove posted items without express permission from the CSC Chair or member of the Committee
- maintain the use of the ARF brand as outlined in the ARF Governance Manual
- adhere to the ARF code of conduct when carrying out their responsibilities
- report any breaches of the Key Principles to the ARF Committee as soon as they emerge.

Lead editors must ensure that material is posted to ARF public Facebook and Instagram immediately when requested and without amendment.

Posts about ARF dogs and pound dogs must be done in consultation with RSC or Committee members as identified. This allows foster carers or appropriate members to have the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the dog's profile.

When posting you must maintain the same high standards of professional conduct and behaviour online as would be expected elsewhere.

Engaging in harassment, bullying, illegal or otherwise inappropriate activity, whether you use an official or private social media account, will not be tolerated.

Failure to abide by the relevant policies and standards may lead to disciplinary action. When representing ARF on social media and other publications must be consistent with the relevant ARF policies, standards and behaviours.

Do not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of ACT Rescue & Foster online unless you are authorised by ARF Committee to do so. Do not use ARF email or social media accounts for private blogging or other forms of personal online comment. Do not use an ARF email address to establish a personal social media account.

Personal use of social media is defined as individual or private use, using your own personal social media accounts and where you are not commenting as an authorised officer of ACT Rescue & Foster.

Example of unacceptable use:

- using ARF resources to access or post any material that is fraudulent, harassing, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, racist, sexist, intimidating, defamatory, malicious or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful

Example of acceptable use:

- sharing content from ARF's public social media accounts to your own accounts

Risks associated with using social media

- Social media sites make it very easy to share information with others. While this convenience is their selling point, it means that you need to be aware of the risks involved in the use of these sites.

Seeking consent to use photos/images and wording

- Photos and wording taken from the abovementioned social media sources are not to be used for greater public consumption without express permission from the owner. This also applies to photos and wording from the website and the ARF members newsletter.
- The purpose of this is so that owner of photos and/or wording has an opportunity to consider the appropriateness of the photo and/or wording being used for greater public consumption.
- For example, the dog may have been put to sleep, the dog is unwell / about to undergo surgery, a person or child is featured in photo, the photo features the inside or outside of a place of residence or frequently visited premises, the photo or wording may be copyrighted or require acknowledgement of the author/photographer.

Word count limit to posts

- Content in the body of a post is not limited. It is preferable to limit posts containing dog profiles to approx. 250 words.
- All posts about available ARF dogs must provide a link in the body of the post to the ARF website or dog profile on the ARF website.

Defamation

Defamation is the injury to another person's reputation either directly or implied through the publication of words or sounds. It does not matter if the defamation was unintentional. For example, if you make false accusations about an individual in a blog which cannot be substantiated.

In certain circumstances accurate information that lowers the public perception of an individual or organisation can amount to defamation if it is published in some jurisdictions.

Avoiding defamation:

- do not post information online that is unsubstantiated relating to a business or an individual
- do not re-tweet or comment on posts and tweets which may be a rumour or confidential relating to a business or individual

Negligence

Negligence is the failure to act when bound by a duty of care. You should take reasonable action to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure someone. The degree of care which the law requires is that which is reasonable in the circumstances of the particular case.

Example: If a public Facebook user lodges a complaint, ARF acknowledges receipt of the message but does not act on the complaint and the complainant sustains injury as a result.

ARF Committee
April 2021

www.fosterdogs.org