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**SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY 2026**

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## Introduction:

Social media platforms offer valuable opportunities for enhancing communication, collaboration, and engagement within the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) community. This Social Media Policy aims to provide clear guidelines and best practices for the responsible and ethical use of social media to all individuals associated with SSSIHL, including but not limited to staff (academic and non-academic), students, research scholars, postdoctoral fellows, visiting and guest faculty, part-time faculty, project trainees, research assistants, and any other persons engaged with the Institute in any capacity.

SSSIHL acknowledges the benefits of social media for disseminating information about academic activities, events, achievements, and research endeavors. However, it also recognizes the risks associated with social media use, including potential breaches of privacy and reputational harm.

While promoting freedom of expression and discourse, SSSIHL emphasizes the importance of adhering to legal and ethical standards in all social media interactions.

## SSSIHL Public Outreach Committee (SPOC)

The SSSIHL Public Outreach Committee (SPOC) was formed vide letter no. SSSIHL/23-24/3447 dt. 19 Dec 2023. Consisting of the strategy, content, and technical teams and led by the Vice-Chancellor as its chairperson, the SPOC will oversee the implementation and upkeep of this policy. [View](#)

## 1 Purpose/Objectives:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that social media usage aligns with the values, principles, and ethos of SSSIHL. It aims to promote positive communication, protect individual privacy, and safeguard the institution's reputation.

- 1.1 This policy aims to regulate the use of SSSIHL's social media channels/platforms and inform all users of their roles, responsibilities, and obligations.
- 1.2 Users of SSSIHL's social media channels/platforms are expected to demonstrate high ethical standards and act responsibly when exchanging ideas and information.
- 1.3 Users must understand that they represent SSSIHL on social media and that their actions can impact the institution's public image and reputation.
- 1.4 The main objective of this policy is to mitigate the risk of any adverse outcomes resulting from social media use.
- 1.5 Every user (student, faculty, staff, and all others) as defined at the end of the policy document is required to read the Institute's social media policy and be completely aware of their responsibilities and expectations.



## 2 Scope:

- 2.1 Social media encompasses online interactive communication tools/platforms that encourage participation, content sharing, and interaction. This policy applies to all social media activity conducted by students, faculty, staff, alumni, and third-party service providers who may be identified as having an association with SSSIHL, or where SSSIHL infrastructure is used to access social media.
- 2.2 This policy distinguishes between official and private social media usage.
- 2.3 While the policy does not aim to regulate personal communication between staff and students, it prohibits actions contrary to SSSIHL's policies, Service Condition Ordinances, and Code of Conduct.
- 2.4 This policy must be interpreted in conjunction with relevant laws such as [the IT \(Amendment\) Act 2008](#), [the Information Technology \(Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code\) Rules, 2021](#), and other relevant policies of SSSIHL.

## 3 Conduct and Interaction with Other Policies and Regulations:

Professional responsibilities apply irrespective of the communication medium. All social media communications representing SSSIHL must comply with relevant policies addressing staff and student conduct, including but not limited to:

- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Faculty](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Staff & Students](#)
- [Gender Equality Policy](#)

## 4 Guidelines for Official Social Media Accounts/Channels:

- 4.1 **Approval Required:** All social media pages/handles designated as 'official' and owned by SSSIHL must receive approval from the Competent Authorities of SSSIHL.
- 4.2 **Recognition Criteria:** Pages/handles lacking formal approval are not acknowledged as official SSSIHL-owned channels.
- 4.3 **Optimization Strategy:** SSSIHL prioritizes efficiency in social media usage by maintaining only essential pages/handles necessary for effective information dissemination.
- 4.4 **Periodic Review:** The SPOC will regularly assess these pages/handles and reserves the authority to create new ones or deactivate existing ones in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- 4.5 **Brand Consistency:** The Office of Communications, will prevent the creation of duplicate accounts and ensure all SSSIHL-associated pages adhere to branding guidelines, including naming conventions and the use of institutional logos.
- 4.6 **Authorized Management:** Only individuals approved and designated by SSSIHL, including faculty, staff, students, and authorized third parties, may manage official social media pages/handles using designated credentials.



**4.7 Media Ownership and Usage:** Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) retains full ownership and unrestricted rights over all media—photos, videos, and audio recordings—captured by the SSSIHL Multimedia Teams, campus/department media team, and Administrative Teams. This applies to media featuring students, research scholars, faculty, and staff, whether as individuals or in groups, during their tenure at SSSIHL.

This includes but is not limited to media recorded during educational, sports, recreational, cultural, service, and spiritual activities conducted within the campus, hostels, Ashram, or any other official venue. It also extends to participation in third-party events held outside the campus as permitted by SSSIHL.

SSSIHL reserves the right to use any such media at its discretion for publication in print and digital formats, including but not limited to websites, advertisements, official communications, and social media platforms, without requiring prior approval from the individuals featured. This includes all media received from / published by the media wing of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, and other sister organizations of SSSIHL featuring SSSIHL students, research scholars, faculty, and staff.

#### **4.8 Unauthorized Use of SSSIHL Name and Logo**

The use of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) logo by any third-party social media handles, pages, or accounts is strictly prohibited. Any social media handle using the name "SSSIHL" or any variation thereof must explicitly state in its profile or page description that it is not an official handle of SSSIHL and that its posts, views, and content are its own and not endorsed by the Institute.

Failure to comply with this requirement may result in appropriate legal or administrative action as deemed necessary by SSSIHL.

#### **4.9 Official Communication and Disclaimer**

SSSIHL is not responsible for any information, content, or media that is not disseminated through its official communication channels or social media handles. Any content shared by third-party handles, pages, or accounts—whether or not they carry the Institute's name or logo—is not endorsed by SSSIHL.

Viewers are strongly advised to verify the authenticity of any information related to SSSIHL by referring to its official handles before sharing it further. The Institute shall not be liable for any misinformation, misrepresentation, or consequences arising from reliance on unofficial sources.



## Guidelines for Social Media Use

### 5 Students' Use of Social Media

- 5.1 All official handles of SSSIHL will be operated by approved faculty members only. Students and Research scholars are not permitted to login, or have access to the pages.
- 5.2 Students may however view and engage with the SSSIHL posts and other posts from their own handles. While doing so, they must adhere strictly to the SSSIHL Social Media Policy and Guidelines.
- 5.3 Students must exercise the highest level of discretion when posting any content or media (photos, videos, audio) on social media or any public platform. They are strictly prohibited from sharing any content that:
  - a. Violates the right to privacy of individuals or inmates of the campus.
  - b. Contravenes the SSSIHL Code of Conduct or trespassing laws, thereby compromising campus security.
  - c. Includes personal details, private, inappropriate, objectionable, or indecent photographs/videos of themselves or others, especially if taken in private spaces such as washrooms, changing rooms, or any other restricted areas.
  - d. Contains derogatory, defamatory, or unpleasant remarks that harm the dignity of individuals or the reputation of the institution.
  - e. Falls under any category of unacceptable content as outlined in Clause 6.2 of the Social Media Policy.
  - f. Is official and confidential data/sensitive information pertaining to SSSIHL that they inadvertently are privy to or have access and not authorised to keep/transmit/share
  - g. Is not original, and posted in violation of the copyrights or intellectual property rights as per [The Copyright Act of 1957](#)
- 5.4 Non-compliance with this clause will result in disciplinary action as per institutional regulations. May result in suspension of the student(s) involved and, upon review by the disciplinary committee, expulsion if deemed necessary. Such students will not be considered for readmission in the future.



## 6 General Code of Conduct

Staff, Students and all users should be mindful of their online presence as it may influence future opportunities. They are encouraged to use social media and actively engage to further the cause of learning, sharing knowledge and factual information in a fair manner duly respecting the community guidelines, privacy and rights of other users, policies of the institute and the law of the land.

### 6.1 Behaviour and Conduct:

#### 6.1.1 Upholding Ethical Standards:

All members affiliated with SSSIHL are expected to utilize social media platforms in alignment with the institution's core values. Posts, comments, and interactions should embody principles such as truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence.

#### 6.1.2 Safeguarding Confidentiality:

Exercise caution to refrain from sharing confidential or sensitive information related to SSSIHL, its students, faculty, or staff on social media platforms. Respect individuals' privacy and adhere to the institution's policies on data protection.

#### 6.1.3 Professional Conduct:

Maintain professionalism in all social media interactions, avoiding behaviors that may be considered offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate. Recognize that online actions reflect not only on individuals but also on the institution's reputation.

#### 6.1.4 Official Representation:

Official social media accounts representing SSSIHL must be overseen by authorized personnel only. Any unauthorized access to these handles will be deemed as a violation and will lead to disciplinary action as outlined in this policy.

#### 6.1.5 Academic Integrity:

Preserve academic integrity by refraining from sharing information that could compromise it, such as engaging in plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic misconduct on social media platforms.

#### 6.1.6 Accountability and Ownership:

Authorized individuals of approved SSSIHL social media handles will take complete ownership of their respective pages and ensure strict compliance to the policy and will be held accountable for any violation thereof.



**6.2 Unacceptable Content:** The following non-exhaustive list outlines content that is deemed unacceptable and should never be posted on social media platforms by users:

- a. Disclosure of confidential information, including unpublished research, personal details of students or staff, or sensitive documents.
- b. Sharing details of complaints or legal proceedings involving SSSIHL without proper authorization.
- c. Posting personal information about individuals without their explicit consent.
- d. Creating fake accounts or using another person's identity without consent.
- e. Sharing inappropriate material that may be perceived as violent, incitement, seditious, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, non-inclusive, illegal, obscene, defamatory, or hostile towards individuals or groups.
- f. Making offensive or derogatory remarks/comments through text/image/video/audio linking to caste, religion, belief, age, colour, nationality, disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or social status.
- g. Make any attempt of violation of copyright, confidentiality, or breach of privacy of an individual, organization/ institutional branding or emblem.
- h. Content posted in violation of the copyrights or intellectual property rights as per [The Copyright Act of 1957](#)
- i. Posting content that constitutes or may lead to criminal offenses.
- j. Anything that may tarnish the reputation of SSSIHL or compromise the safety of its community members.
- k. Any other details or information outlined in the social media policy.
- l. Engaging in conduct that is unbecoming of a student of the institute.
- m. Any adverse content that goes against the stipulations/rules of SSSIHL, the Constitution of India, and/or Social-Network Intermediaries, and does not promote general harmony would entail incriminating conduct at the institute.
- n. Unauthorized use of the SSSIHL name or logo or its letterhead to publish any personal work not associated with SSSIHL
- o. SSSIHL reserves the right to order the removal of content from an official social media account if it is deemed that such posting or on account of it or its submissions pose a risk to its reputation or any of one of its members.
- p. Stakeholders who post views, opinions, or images online in breach of any stipulation may be subjected to disciplinary proceedings by SSSIHL. Such actions may also entail prosecution under criminal and civil proceedings.
- q. A stakeholder including students shall remain personally responsible/ liable for anything he/she publishes on social media.
- r. Notwithstanding anything herein-above if any act of social media has been adjudicated by any court of law/ tribunal / quasi-judicial body as illegal, it will also be deemed as a fit case for disciplinary proceedings by SSSIHL.



**Note:**

- i. Individuals should be mindful that statements causing harm to others' reputations or interfering with ongoing disciplinary/legal processes may result in potential legal claims.
- ii. Communications on social media are subject to the legal framework of the Government of India and SSSIHL, aiming to prevent interference with legal proceedings.
- iii. Individuals must refrain from sharing information related to complaints or legal proceedings in a manner that could undermine institutional processes, compromise community safety, or bring disrepute to SSSIHL. Concerns or complaints must be raised or escalated through the appropriate internal channels and established mechanisms.

**6.2.1 Cyberbullying:** SSSIHL strictly prohibits all forms of cyberbullying and will take disciplinary action against perpetrators. The following non-exhaustive list of examples illustrate behaviors considered as cyberbullying:

- i) Spreading rumors, lies, or gossip with malicious intent
- ii) Engaging in intimidating or aggressive behavior as perceived by social media users
- iii) Posting offensive or threatening comments or content
- iv) Deliberately mocking individuals to harass or humiliate them
- v) Liking or forwarding content that supports cyberbullying

**6.3 Cybersecurity Awareness:**

Exercise caution regarding personal information and be vigilant about cybersecurity. Avoid sharing login credentials, financial details, or any sensitive data on public platforms.

**6.4 Compliance with Laws and Policies:**

Adhere to all applicable laws and institutional policies while utilizing social media. This includes but is not limited to copyright and trademark laws, intellectual property rights, and the guidelines established by SSSIHL.

**6.5 Reporting Policy Violations:**

Promptly report any violations of this social media policy to the relevant authorities within the institution. Timely reporting aids in maintaining a safe and respectful online environment. You may write to [registrar@sssihl.edu.in](mailto:registrar@sssihl.edu.in) with a copy to [media@sssihl.edu.in](mailto:media@sssihl.edu.in).

**6.6 Consequences of Violations:**

Violations of this social media policy may lead to disciplinary action, ranging from reprimands to suspension of social media privileges, depending on the severity and nature of the infraction.

**6.7 Review and Updates:**

This social media policy will undergo periodic review to ensure its continued relevance and efficacy. Updates may be implemented as needed to address emerging trends or technological advancements.



## 7. Guidelines for Creation and Management of Social Media pages for various Clubs

Departments proposing to create or continue LinkedIn pages (or any platform) for Clubs must adhere to the following guidelines:

### 7.1 Department Ownership

Every Club page must be owned and overseen by the HoD and Dean of concerned academic department under which the club operates. Clubs cannot independently create or manage pages without departmental oversight.

### 7.2 Registrar's Approval

All requests to create a new Club page must be submitted to the Registrar for approval before any page is created.

### 7.3 Page Creation by SSSIHL Admin

Upon approval on LinkedIn

- The SSSIHL Admin team will create the LinkedIn page as an Affiliate/Showcase Page of the Institute's official LinkedIn page
- Page administrators will be assigned as per the approved request

### 7.4 Designated Faculty Responsibility

A designated faculty member must be assigned as the primary owner/admin of the page and will be responsible for the content published and for ensuring compliance with the Institute's social media Policy.

### 7.5 Institutional Oversight

An SSSIHL administrative representative will be added as Super Admin for all official LinkedIn pages to ensure institutional oversight and continuity.

### 7.6 Existing Club LinkedIn Pages

Departments that wish to continue operating existing Club LinkedIn pages must:

- Submit a formal request to the Registrar seeking approval to continue the page.
- Provide page credentials and details of current administrators.

Upon approval, the SSSIHL Admin team will coordinate with the department to convert the page into an Affiliate/Showcase page of the Institute, wherever feasible, to ensure compliance with institutional guidelines.



## 7.7 Use of Institute Name and Identity

Only officially recognised clubs of SSSIHL may use the Institute's name, logo, or institutional identity on LinkedIn pages.

## 7.8 Non-Recognised Clubs

Club pages that are not formally approved and recognised by SSSIHL are not permitted to use the Institute's name, logo, or institutional content. Any such use will be treated as a violation of the Institute's social media Policy.

## 7.9 Content Compliance

All content posted must reflect the values, ethos, and reputation of SSSIHL and comply with the Institute's Code of Conduct and social media Policy.

## 8. Breach of the Policy:

Any breach of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, which may include warnings, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the severity of the violation. Any individual may be required to remove internet or social media posts that SSSIHL finds to be in breach of the policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in further disciplinary action.

## 9. Monitoring:

A Social Media Policy Committee will oversee policy implementation, provide guidance to users, monitor online references to SSSIHL, and recommend disciplinary action when necessary.

## 10. Procedure to Handle Complaints:

Complaints regarding policy breaches can be emailed to [registrar@sssihl.edu.in](mailto:registrar@sssihl.edu.in) with a copy to [media@sssihl.edu.in](mailto:media@sssihl.edu.in) which will assess the severity and recommend appropriate action to the disciplinary committee.

## 11. Punishments:

Violations of the policy may result in minor or major penalties, fines, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

**11.1 Communicating Punishments:** Penalties will be communicated in writing to the concerned individual(s) by relevant authorities. Discipline records will be treated as confidential and Per the law.



### Acknowledgment:

All individuals associated with SSSIHL are required to read, understand, and acknowledge receipt of this social media policy. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in consequences outlined in Clause 6 above. By following these guidelines, the SSSIHL community can contribute to a positive and respectful online environment that aligns with the institution's values and ethos.

**Important Note:** This policy must be read in conjunction with relevant legislation, including the Information Technology Act 2000 and the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

Link to Legislations: [The Information Technology Act, 2000, and The Indian Penal Code, 1860](#)

## Annexure A:

### Using Social Media - Best Practices

Social media offers tremendous benefits for communication and staying updated on news and research. While we encourage its use, it's essential to recognize and mitigate the associated risks. Here are some tips to help you navigate social media responsibly, manage your professional reputation, and adhere to SSSIHL guidelines and legal requirements:

- **Be Mindful of Publicity:** Remember that everything you post online is potentially public. Even content shared on closed profiles or private messaging services can become public without your consent.
- **Think Before You Post:** Some online communities can be volatile, tempting users to behave in ways they otherwise wouldn't. Consider whether you want your family, professors, or future employers to see your posts. High-profile cases have shown how private messaging service content can be captured and shared, leading to disciplinary actions. If unsure whether it is appropriate to write about certain kinds of material or respond to a post in your role as an SSSIHL member, please refer to SSSIHL's social media Policy.
- **Consider Perception:** Reflect on how your messages may be perceived by others. Offensive content, including text, images, and videos, can cause significant harm to your personal and professional reputation. Employers often review digital footprints, including old tweets and forum comments, during the hiring process.
- **Privacy Settings:** Regularly review and adjust your privacy settings to protect personal information from misuse. Be cautious about sharing sensitive details like your address, phone number, date of birth, and email address. Avoid sharing bank details online and be aware that content shared privately can still be made public by others.
- **Responsible and Purposeful Use of Technology:** Use devices and the internet mindfully, ensuring they serve a productive purpose rather than leading to excessive dependence.



Overuse can contribute to issues such as attention deficit, depression, hyperactivity, low self-esteem, and social isolation. Treat technology as a tool to support your career and personal growth, while maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

By following these tips, you can leverage social media safely and responsibly, enhancing your online presence while safeguarding your reputation and privacy.

### Important Definitions

- **Social media:** Any website, platform, or medium that allows for public communication, including but not limited to social and professional networking sites, blogs, micro-blogging sites, video and photo-sharing sites, forums, discussion boards and groups, podcasting sites, and instant messaging services.
- **SSSIHL:** SSSIHL also referred to as 'the institute', is an acronym for Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, a deemed to be a university, under Sec. 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956, with its administrative office in Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh, India. Founded in 1981, SSSIHL is a visible manifestation of our Founder Chancellor Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's vision of "Education for Human Transformation" providing quality education, **free** of any cost for all students irrespective of income, religion, or region through an open admissions policy *and has four campuses: For Women at Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, and Men at Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh; Kadugodi, Bangalore, Karnataka, and at Nandigiri, Karnataka.*
- **Alumni:** Students who have graduated from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning ("SSSIHL"), Prasanthi Nilayam, Sri Sathya Sai District, A.P - 515134, erstwhile Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science college for Women, Anantapur, erstwhile Sri Sathya Sai College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Kadugodi Post, Bangalore - 560067, erstwhile Sri Sathya Sai Arts, Science and Commerce College, Prasanthi Nilayam, Sri Sathya Sai District, A.P 515134.
- **Students:** A person (male/female) who is currently enrolled in or /admitted to SSSIHL and pursuing any programme at any one of our campuses.
- **Users:** Students, research scholars, regular and temporary faculty and staff, including Guest/visiting faculty, part-time faculty, contractors third-party service providers, and /or those authorized to generate content for social media platforms associated with SSSIHL, alumni, consultants, or any other person participating in social media and who may be identified as having an association with the SSSIHL, or uses SSSIHL infrastructure to access social media.

Registrar