Communication Standard

Policy and Standard Operating Procedure

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Signed by:	

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INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out OPERATION FLORIAN Ltd standards for communicating using a variety of methods.

POLICY

OPERATION FLORIAN is committed to the promotion of effective and clear communication by which ever means is appropriate to the circumstances. This will include email, letters and written material, telephone, internet discussion forums or other medium which may be used from time to time. Staff, volunteers and stakeholders will at all times attempt to be:
- Efficient and helpful in dealing with queries
- Prompt and timely in dealing with replies
- Be accurate in the giving of reasons or explanations
- Be realistic in describing outcomes, limitations or options
- Firm, but balanced and polite in dealing with difficult situations

SOCIAL MEDIA

This document also refers to all forms of social media (for example, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) and aims to provide guidance on the appropriate use of social media for work involving Operation Florians' activities. The charity recognises that such channels are increasingly useful communication tools and acknowledges the right of members to use these sites. However, members must be aware of the potential implications of posting material on social media sites which could be considered in breach of the charity's Policy and Standard Operating Procedure.
This guidance is designed:
- *to encourage good practice*
- *to protect the charity's reputation and its members*

Key Principles
- *You must avoid bringing the charity into disrepute in any way, please consult your project manager if you are in any doubt. You may be expected to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of any Charity's Policy and Standard Operating procedures.*

- *You should not reveal confidential Charity information on social media as identified in **the Confidential Information policy**. This might include aspects of Operation Florian's policy, work you are undertaking or details of internal Operation Florian discussions.*

- *You must think carefully about what you post about the Charity and about other people, and how you interact with people online. In general, you should not engage in any activity that refers to the Charity or members of the Charity online that would be unacceptable in the workplace. You should respect the privacy and the feelings of others, and not post any sensitive information about colleagues or others without their permission. This might include contact details or photographs.*

- *You must not engage in any form of communication which is discriminatory, defamatory or obscene with members of charity on social media, or use social media to bully another individual.*

- *If anyone from the media or press contacts you about posts on your site which relate to the Charity you should discuss it with the relevant project manager and a member of the Board of Directors before responding.*

CORRESPONDENCE

- Staff will accept full responsibility for the accuracy and content of their letters
- Correspondence will receive a reply or an acknowledgement within 7 working days
- All items will have the proper postage paid, and this will reflect the urgency of the item
- Staff will accept ownership of each item of correspondence received by them, ensuring this is passed on to the appropriate person.
- Correspondence passed on by other staff/volunteers will receive the same priority attention as other items awaiting action
- Each item of written work will be checked for clarity, accuracy, good grammar / punctuation, and will be worded to a clear and concise standard
- Complex items (e.g. complaint replies) will be quality checked by an appropriate third party prior to issue
- Printed letterhead will be used in all correspondence, however where letters are to be sent from a mail merge it is acceptable for Word processed / generated graphical letterhead or icons to be used
- No letterhead will be used for personal purposes
- All documents will be spellchecked and proof-read prior to printing

EMAIL

- Emails sent will be worded and punctuated to the same standard as written items
- Emails requiring a response will be acknowledged or replied to within 7 working days
- In the event of a personal absence arrangements will be made for either an out of office facility to be applied, for a deputy to have access to incoming items, or for an alternative publication of a deputy acting on behalf of the absentee
- Emails should reflect the Charity's view, and / or represent OPERATION FLORIAN to external recipients in the same way has written correspondence, therefore care should be taken in both content and style
- The use of abbreviations or other fashionable shortened wording will not take place
- Emails should not be responded to immediately, without the opportunity to carefully consider the nature, tone, or content of the reply.

TELEPHONE

- Answer the call within 6 rings
- Take responsibility for the call or the routing of the call to a specific person
- Follow up on messages and items passed to other staff
- Keep the caller informed if they are delayed on the telephone (e.g. are on hold)
- Return calls or action ring-backs promptly.

FORUMS

- Where Trustees'/Directors/staff or volunteers are authorised to participate in forums (e.g. groups of similar professionals) on the internet, any views expressed should clearly be those of the individual and not of OPERATION FLORIAN
- No confidential, or potentially confidential or sensitive information or material should be released at any time
- Where it is felt that a "OPERATION FLORIAN" response is required to any forum message or topic this must be discussed with the Chair/Secretary.