

Moderation Policy

September 2023

Our Strategic objectives relating to young people with high learning potential, their parents and carers, and their schools:

- *Empowering Young People*
- *Empowering Parents*
- *Creating a Community*
- *Advocating for Needs and Rights*
- *Strengthening our sustainability and effectiveness*

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1. Overview / Purpose

- Potential Plus UK believes in the importance of producing and circulating high quality written information, both to its members in particular and the wider public in general. We do our utmost to ensure that this happens.
- Potential Plus UK is involved in the moderation of two Facebook groups alongside our members' area on the YourMembership (YM) platform, so having clear guidance to follow is important for steering how these groups are moderated. Potential Plus UK believes that these groups should be places for active discussion and acknowledges that disagreement may arise at times in these spaces. The Moderation Policy is in place to ensure that these spaces are groups of respectful discourse.
- Potential Plus UK wants to preserve the integrity of our written information, so while we encourage open debate, users know that the views discussed are not necessarily either our policy or current guidelines on the issue.
- Potential Plus UK also wants to ensure that users of the groups are protected as much as possible from marketing of products and services by 3rd parties.
- Any actions that users take in a forum should be moderated transparently, consistently and fairly.

2. Scope

All of those who work for or volunteer with Potential Plus UK are expected to comply with this policy (including employees, casual workers, trustees, and volunteers).

This policy covers the views of users on forums, along with a set of rules about what users can and cannot do.

3. Definitions

- User – any individual who is a member of the charity or who has access to one of our forums.
- Forums – an area where users can engage in discussion under the moderation of Potential Plus UK. This includes (but is not limited to) our Facebook groups (Parenting High Potential and Parenting Gifted Children UK), and the YM Members' Area linked to our website.
- Stance – a position statement from Potential Plus UK about a specific issue.
- Marketing – the promotion of products or services of financial benefit to the supplier of the products or services.

4. Policy

Potential Plus UK feels discussions on forums should be actively encouraged and good ideas for resources shared. However, it is also important that:

- Users understand that the views of others on these platforms are not necessarily those of Potential Plus UK.

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- Users have the opportunity to understand what our approach to an issue is, particularly when it is the subject of one of our Fact or Advice Sheets, webinars or blogs.
- Users are protected from inappropriate, unrequested and/or repeated marketing of products and services by 3rd parties.
- There is an appropriate mechanism in place which moderates this traffic transparently, consistently and fairly.

There should be a statement on each forum that Potential Plus UK moderates to state that views expressed on the forum are not necessarily the views of Potential Plus UK.

There should be a statement on each forum that the inappropriate, unrequested and/or repeated marketing of products or services is not allowed and goes against the protective nature of the forum. If there is a user request for suggestions of a product or service, a reasonable response by another user might be the posting of a website link or company address or telephone number together with an evaluation of their personal experience. Unrequested posts or multiple posts in response to a request, which are obviously marketing in nature, are not acceptable and will be removed.

When appropriate, the employee, casual worker, volunteer or trustee responsible for the moderation of a forum should post a message which reminds users of what our policy is or where it can be found. This helps to differentiate between those users who are giving their own view, and the stated Stance or approach of the organisation. It also helps to differentiate between the appropriateness of sharing an idea for a resource in response to a request from another user, and unrequested and repeated marketing.

Whenever an individual who works with or volunteers with Potential Plus UK uses these forums, they must distinguish between their own views and the organisation's views when they post anything which could be seen as fact or the organisation's approach towards an issue. The two can be differentiated by phrases of 'in my opinion' or 'in my own view', compared with 'Potential Plus UK believes' or 'Potential Plus UK's Stance is.

All forums which involve user generated material have an overall moderator who is either an employee, casual worker, a Trustee or a volunteer who goes there regularly to monitor discussion and act as moderator. On forums where traffic is particularly heavy (e.g. our Facebook Group 'Parenting High Potential'), this monitoring role may be shared by one or more volunteers who understand the organisation and their role. Where the decision to remove a comment/post/user requires clarification within our guidelines, moderators are encouraged to contact the responsible employee, who has the final say.

Removal of a post is seen as a last resort and is reserved for posts which:

- Cause offence
- Involve swearing or bad language
- Are discriminatory or inflammatory or incite inappropriate action
- Are inappropriate, unrequested, and/or repeated marketing of products or services by a third party.

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Disagreement about written information produced by Potential Plus UK of itself is not cause for removal of a post although this may give cause for an explanation of the organisation's approach, stance or policy.

When the user does not agree with the decision made about the removal of their post, feedback or views, they have the right to appeal.

In the first instance, the Chief Executive or their appointed deputy acts as the overall moderator. Their role is to investigate the issue and to make the final decision about what is to happen.

If the user is not satisfied with the outcome of this appeal, the case is investigated by a team of three Trustees including the Chair. A decision will be made about what is to be done. The decision of this committee is final. If appropriate a statement of a decision taken with the rationale will be posted on the forum.

5. Monitoring and Reporting

Moderation decisions should be recorded for every incident, with the information kept on file and referred back to as appropriate. This record of incidents is kept on an Excel spreadsheet on our shared area. This should be reviewed periodically by the Chief Executive or their appointed deputy.

This policy should be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at least once every three years, or sooner should issues be raised with this Moderation Policy.

Forum users should be able to easily access this Policy and be reminded of the existence of this Policy as appropriate.

6. Training

Any individual involved in the moderation of Potential Plus UK forums should read this policy, and employees, casual workers, trustees and volunteers with the organisation will be reminded of this policy on a yearly basis.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Chief Executive should review the moderation log periodically, inform all employees, casual workers, trustees and volunteers of this Policy, and is involved in the appeal process.
- The Board of Trustees should review this policy at least once every three years and is the second and final stage of appeal.
- The Chair of Trustees is responsible for convening an appeals' committee.
- Forum Moderators should be aware of this policy and ensure that they comply with the reporting requirements, as well as reminding users that views expressed on forums may not represent those of Potential Plus UK and that the forums should remain marketing-free environments for the protection of users.

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- Employees, casual workers, trustees and volunteers of Potential Plus UK should be aware of this policy and ensure that they appropriately differentiate where views expressed are their own or where views are those of Potential Plus UK.

8. Related Standards, Policies and Processes

The following standards and procedures are linked with the Moderation Policy:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Policy on Maintaining Quality Standards in Production of Written Materials
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Communications Policy
- Complaints procedure

9. Revision History

List all changes made to the document including version number, date approved etc. using the below table.

Version:	Date Approved:	Approved by:	Owner:	Author:	Summary of Change:	Review Date:
Created 230909	19/09/2023	Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees	Daniel Dipper	Updating to new policy template, information added on monitoring and reporting and training	Sept 2026
Created 131212	01/01/2014	Board of Trustees	Board of Trustees		Original	Jan 2017