

Facebook Groups

Facebook groups are a valuable tool for promoting your organisation and prompting discussion. They can also be used as part of service delivery or as a way of achieving the charity's mission. However, like any public representation of your organisation, due care and guidance is required to nurture and grow your group ensuring the right direction and message is sustained. Safeguarding must be kept at the forefront of all endeavours – both online and off – to ensure best practice, to prevent damage to reputation and to maintain proper protection of personal data and confidentiality. The advice from experienced admins and moderators is that it is better to start with some rules than none.

Facebook has a very comprehensive guide to walk you through all things group-related from set up, through management, to making the most of your group. Please see the link below:

Getting Started with Groups

In this easy-to-read resource, Facebook opens a conversation about both the opportunities and points for consideration created by Facebook groups. The authors encourage you to use all the tools at your disposal – including a mission statement, house rules, member questions, approval requests, trusted administrators, photos and welcoming member posts – to promote and maintain your group's message.

Summary of Key Points

1. Think about exactly what the group's purpose is going to be and the rule set that you need to create to make it that.
2. Write a description that includes your group's mission, choose a photo, invite a trusted friend and write a welcome post.
3. Write House Rules and introduce a Member Approval Process. Set your group up so that the Community Manager approves every person who requests to join. Use post approvals to decide what posts appear in your group. One option is to use post approvals from time to time rather than being on as default. You could turn them on when on holiday or if there is a contentious subject in discussion. See the below links:



How to Write Great Rules

The Group Rules featured on Facebook offers four example rules that you can use or edit. These are based on some of the most common rules admins use across many types of groups and are centred around being kind and courteous, no hate speech or bullying, no promotions or spam and respecting everyone's privacy.

The charity **Mind** have their group rules on their website which are a good example: [Mind House Rules](#)

Note the transparency in being upfront about the privacy settings and exactly who will be approved, the clear statement of what the group is and is not designed to be used for, the statement of 'dos

and don'ts' for members to agree with so they know exactly what is expected of their behaviour and the emphasis on not giving advice with the recognition that a Facebook group is not the correct scenario for that. It is also worth mentioning the point that **Mind** makes about people's personal details. Consider good Data Protection practice and consent – treat other people's information as you would want your own to be treated.



Membership questions and member request filtering are tools used by admins to help better manage and prioritize membership requests: [Member Requests](#)

Depending on the type of group you run and the group's purpose, post approvals may be the right choice: [Post Approvals](#)

4. Choose the right privacy settings: [Privacy Settings](#)

Do you want your group to be Public, Private but visible in search, or Private and hidden in search? Consider the sensitivity of what's discussed in your group as well as the group's subject matter, goals and culture.

5. Establish a sense of community by welcoming new members and develop this through strong leadership, staying true to your mission, bringing in the right members through enforcing rules and using feedback to empower members.

6. Create an inclusive community by making diversity and inclusion part of your mission, recruiting members with this in mind and making your branding and community imagery inclusive and representative of all members. Train your staff and volunteers on inclusion, direct them towards your group's Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies, impose strict moderation and model positive behaviour.

Create a space for diversity and a space of zero tolerance for racism, bigotry, hate speech and misinformation. Zero tolerance can mean:

- Deleting a post or comment
- Turning off comments on a post (with explanation as to why)
- Muting, removing or blocking the offending member.

7. Prevent conflict in your group by posting rules early on, and continuing to re-post them at regular intervals, encourage members to report posts and act quickly when rules are broken. In cases where something goes against Facebook's Community Standards (nudity, hate speech or threats of violence), report the post to Facebook.

8. Prevent burnout by setting boundaries for yourself. Practice self-care and identify and address your sensitivities. Build a trustworthy team.

9. Create a team of admins and moderators – moderators have fewer permissions than admins. Use a private group for admins and moderators to communicate with each other. Upload training documents or create a Code of Conduct and pin it to this group for team members to refer to when dealing with issues.

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