

Managing Social Media Following a Bereavement

This guide has been created to help support people to make decisions about managing their own social media accounts or the accounts of a person who has died.

Social media is a catch-all phrase used to describe websites and apps that enable people to create and share content or to participate in social networking via the internet.

The table on the next page gives a summary of which social media platforms this section deals with.

Options to Control Accounts

Memorialise

Profile settings will stay as they were at the time of the person's death. Depending upon settings, people may be able to leave messages on the page.

Deactivate

The profile, photos, comments and likes will be hidden until you choose to reactivate it. The information and content does is not destroyed.

Delete

Your profile, photos, comments and likes will be permanently erased and no longer visible to friends or accessible to the profile holder

Options to Control Accounts

	Memorialise	Deactivate	Delete
Facebook	✓	✓	✓
Instagram	✓		✓
Twitter			✓
LinkedIn			✓
Google			✓
Snapchat	Snapchat offers the option of deleting an account but that is only possible when the user is logged into their own account.		
Pinterest			✓

Checking the Privacy Settings on Your Own Social Media Account

If a social media page is 'public', this means that anyone on the internet can see all information visible on the page e.g. personal comments, photos or videos.

Reporters in the media routinely search social media to find out information for a story, to contact people for comment and to find photographs to accompany a story. Some people would prefer that the media did not have access to this information. This section explains steps you can take to ensure that information available on social media stays private.

Existence of a Person's Social Media Account After Their Death

Until a social media company is informed of a death, a person's account will continue to exist.

Each social media company has different policies and practices regarding how they allow people to control an account following a death.

This section will explain options that are available to users of the most commonly used social media companies.

Managing a Social Media Account of the Person Who Has Died

Some companies allow you to request that a page is 'memorialised'. A memorialized account will have the word "Remembering" in front of the person's name, and will not show up in Facebook ads, "People You May Know," or send out reminders on the person's birthday.

If a person has named you as a legacy contact, you will be able to look after the account if it's memorialised.

If they haven't chosen a legacy contact, then you may have to prove that you are related to the deceased before you are given access.

Temporarily Hiding Your Own Account

Yes, Some companies allow you to 'deactivate' an account. The information and content does not get deleted, your profile, photos, comments and likes will be hidden until you choose to reactivate it.

Permanently Deleting an Account

Yes, it is possible to delete any of your own existing social media accounts.

It is also possible to request to have a deceased person's social media accounts deleted. Every social media platform has their own request form and information they require from you to submit if you want an account to be deleted.

Facebook

Memorialise

Deactivate

Delete



What You Need to Do

1. Type the following website address directly into the searchbar of your internet browser

tinyurl.com/contact-form-facebook



This will take you to a Facebook help page titled "Special request for a medically incapacitated or deceased person's account"

2. Fill in the form the best you can
3. You will be asked to upload one of the following documents to confirm you're an immediate family member or executor of the account holder
 - Power of attorney
 - Birth certificate
 - Last will and testament
 - Estate letter
4. You will also be asked to upload one of the following documents as of proof of death.
 - Death Certificate
 - Obituary (they do not accept newspaper notifications)
 - Memorial card

Facebook Memorialised Accounts

Memorialised accounts are a place for friends and family to gather and share memories after a person has passed away. Memorialised accounts have the following key features

- The word 'Remembering' will be shown next to the person's name on their profile
- Depending on the privacy settings of the account, friends can share memories on the memorialised timeline
- Content the person shared (eg: photos, posts) stays on Facebook and are visible to the audience it was shared with
- Memorialised profiles don't appear in public spaces such as in suggestions for 'People You May Know,' ads or birthday reminders
- No one can log into a memorialised account
- Memorialised accounts that don't have a legacy contact can't be changed (more about legacy contacts on the next page)
- 'Pages' with a sole admin whose account was memorialised will be removed from Facebook if they receive a valid request
- It is possible to delete an account after it's been memorialised. Type the following website address into the searchbar in your internet browser.

tinyurl.com/contact-help-facebook



Facebook Legacy Contacts

This option is currently available only on Facebook.

You can add, change or remove your legacy contact in your account's General Settings at any time.

A legacy contact is someone you choose to look after your account if it's memorialised. Once your account is memorialised, your legacy contact will have the option to do things like:

- Write a pinned post for your profile (example: to share a final message on your behalf or provide information about a memorial service)
- Respond to new friend requests (example: old friends or family members who weren't yet on Facebook)
- Update your profile picture and cover photo
- Request the removal of your account

If You Delete an Account

- You can't regain access once it's deleted
- Facebook delays deletion a few days after it's requested. A deletion request is cancelled if you log back into your Facebook account during this time
- It may take up to 90 days to delete data stored in backup systems. The information isn't accessible on Facebook during this time
- Some information, such as messaging history, isn't stored in your account. This means friends may still have access to messages you sent after an account has been deleted
- Copies of some material (example: log records) may remain in Facebook's database but are kept separate from information that can identify you

If You Deactivate an Account

- You can reactivate whenever you want
- People can't see your timeline or search for you
- Some information may remain visible to others (example: messages you sent)

Instagram

Memorialise

Deactivate

Delete



What You Need to Do

1. Type the following website address directly into the search-bar of your internet browser

tinyurl.com/instagram-contact-form



This will take you to an Instagram help page titled "Removal request for deceased person on Instagram"

2. You will be asked to upload a document to confirm you're an immediate family member or executor of the account holder

You will be asked to upload one of the following documents to confirm that you are an immediate family member

- Power of attorney
- Birth certificate
- Last will and testament
- Estate letter

3. You will also be asked to upload one of the following document as proof of death

- Death Certificate
- Obituary
- Memorial card

Instagram Memorialised Accounts

Key Features

- Instagram doesn't allow anyone to log into a Memorialised account
- The profile of a Memorialised account doesn't appear differently from an account that hasn't been Memorialised
- Memorialised accounts can't be changed in any way. This includes changes to likes, followers, tags, posts and comments
- Posts the deceased person shared, including photos and videos, stay on Instagram and are visible to the audience they were shared with
- Memorialised accounts don't appear in public spaces, like people's Explore section

Twitter

Memorialise

Deactivate

Delete



What You Need to Do

1. Type the following website address directly into the search-bar of your internet browser

tinyurl.com/twitter-contact-form



2. After you submit the form, Twitter will send a confirmation email with further instructions.
3. You will be asked to provide the following information
 - The username of the person who has died
 - The death certificate
 - Proof of your identity
 - Evidence of your relationship to the person who has died

Removing Content

Twitter will remove imagery of deceased individuals in certain circumstances. Immediate family members and other authorised individuals may request the removal of images or video of deceased individuals, from when critical injury occurs to the moments before or after death, by sending a request to Twitter via the privacy form.

When reviewing such media removal requests, Twitter considers public interest factors such as the newsworthiness of the content and may not be able to honour every request.

Google Account

Memorialise	Deactivate	Delete
		✓

Google accounts include access to platforms such as Gmail, Google+ and YouTube

You can request to

- Close the account
- Submit a request for funds from the account
- Obtain data from the account

What You Need to Do

1. Type the following website address directly into the search-bar of your internet browser

 

This link will take you to a page titled "Submit a request regarding a deceased user's account"

2. Choose from one of the three options presented
3. You will be asked to upload
 - A form of government issued identification to confirm who you are
 - The death certificate
4. Upon review, Google will then get in touch with you by email to continue the process

LinkedIn

Memorialise

Deactivate

Delete



What You Need to Do

1. Type the following website address directly into the search-bar of your internet browser

tinycloud.com/linkedin-contact-form



This link will take you to a page titled "Request removal of a deceased member's LinkedIn profile"

2. You will be asked to provide the following information
 - The person's name
 - The URL to their LinkedIn profile
 - Your relationship to them
 - Their email address
 - The date they passed away
 - The name of the company they most recently worked at

Snapchat

Memorialise	Deactivate	Delete

Unlike other social media platforms, Snapchat does not have a clear policy on how they deal with a deceased person's account.

An account will remain active until Snapchat determine that the account is inactive and may then be deleted by the company.

The only way to obtain access to a deceased person's Snapchat account is if they have left you their username and password.

Snapchat offers the option of deleting an account but that is only possible when the user is logged into their account.

If you plan to delete an account, it may take some time for Snapchat to delete your data.

Pinterest

Memorialise

Deactivate

Delete



What You Need to Do

1. Type the following website address directly into the search-bar of your internet browser

tinyurl.com/pinterest-contact-form



1. This link will take you to a page titled "Get More Help"
2. Choose from the menu "Deactivate or close account"
3. Fill in the following form the best you can
4. Pinterest will then email you to discuss the closure of the account and may request proof of death and proof of your relationship to the person who has died

Contact Forms

You can contact the most commonly used social media companies via the following links to request to have a social media account memorialised or deleted.

Facebook

tinyurl.com/contact-form-facebook

Instagram

tinyurl.com/twitter-contact-form

Twitter

tinyurl.com/twitter-contact-form

Google

tinyurl.com/google-contact-form

LinkedIn

tinyurl.com/linkedin-contact-form

Pinterest

tinyurl.com/pinterest-contact-form

Other popular social media platforms include:

Tinder

Neighbourhood

Bumble

Tumblr

MeetUp

Blogger

Reddit

Medium

Borrow My Doggy

Flickr