



**Tree of Hope**

Transforming the health of  
sick and disabled children

# Tree of Hope

## Safe Storytelling Guide

*Sharing your family's story with confidence, warmth and care*

### About this guide

Sharing your child's story can be a powerful way to help others understand your journey and support your fundraising. It can also feel very personal, so it's important to think carefully about what feels right for you and your family.

At Tree of Hope, we are here to help you share your story safely and with confidence, while protecting your child's dignity, privacy and future.

There is no single right way to tell your story. You are always in control of what you choose to share.

## Where Your Story May Be Shared

Your story may be seen in a number of places, including:

- Your fundraising page
- Tree of Hope's website or social media
- Your own social media, WhatsApp or community groups
- Local media, if you choose to take part

Once something is shared publicly, it may be copied, reshared or found online in the future. It can be difficult to fully remove later – so it is always worth taking a moment to think before you post.

## What to Keep Private

You can tell a rich, heartfelt story without sharing personal details that could identify your family. Here's a simple guide:

### Best left out

- Home address or postcode
- School name or location
- Hospital name or ward
- Full date of birth
- Daily routines or regular locations
- Names of carers or medical professionals

### Safe to share

- Your child's first name (if you're happy to)
- General area (e.g. 'near Leeds')
- Your child's age
- Type of treatment or therapy
- How the funding will help your child
- Progress updates and milestones

## Sharing Photos and Videos Safely

A great photo can bring your campaign to life, but it's worth taking a moment before you post. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

**Check what's in the background.** Scan any photo or video for anything that could give away your location – a street sign, school uniform, house number, or recognisable building.

**Turn off location tagging.** Smartphones often embed hidden location data into photos. Turn off location services on your camera app and avoid using automatic location tags when posting on social media.

**Always ask before including others.** If other children appear in your content – siblings, friends or classmates – please get their parent or carer's permission before sharing.

**You don't have to show your child's face.** A photo taken from behind, a campaign logo, or a creative image works just as well for families who'd prefer to keep their child's image private. Do whatever feels right for you.

## Managing Online Interactions

Most people who come across your campaign will be warm, generous and genuinely rooting for your child. But it's good to know how to handle things if they don't feel that way.

**You're always in control.** You never have to share more than you're comfortable with, or respond to anyone who makes you feel uneasy.

**It's absolutely fine to delete, block or ignore.** If a comment or message feels inappropriate or intrusive, you can remove it or block the person without any explanation.

**Be cautious with direct messages.** Never share personal details – your address, phone number or bank details – with anyone who contacts you privately through social media, however friendly they seem.

**If something concerns you, please contact us.** Your Family Support Officer is always here. If you receive anything that worries you, don't hesitate to get in touch.

## Your Child's Story, Their Dignity

Your child's story is powerful – and it belongs to them. As you share it with the world, keep their dignity and privacy at the heart of every decision you make.

**Lead with who they are, not just what they live with.** The most powerful stories show your child's personality, humour, joy and potential – not just their challenges.

**Share enough to help people understand – and no more.** You don't need to share every difficult detail to move people. Keep the most private moments for those closest to you.

**Involve your child where you can.** Where possible, involve older children and young people in deciding what goes online. For younger children, ask yourself: would they feel proud and comfortable with this when they grow up?

**Make sure everyone is in agreement.** Before sharing anything publicly, make sure everyone with parental responsibility is on board. You can change your mind at any time – we will always support you to update or remove content where we can.

## Being Honest and Clear

It's important that your story is accurate and transparent. Share information you know to be true, be clear about what the funds will be used for and avoid making promises about outcomes.

An honest, straightforward story builds trust with the people supporting you – and that trust is what keeps them engaged throughout your campaign.

## Sharing Your Story with the Media

Local press and radio can be incredibly powerful for raising awareness. If you'd like to explore media opportunities, Tree of Hope can connect you with our PR specialist. Everything will be discussed with you first, and your Family Support Officer will guide you through the process.

## A Quick Check Before You Share

Before posting anything, ask yourself:

- Am I happy for this to be seen by anyone, including strangers?
- Have I avoided anything that could identify our location, school or daily routine?
- Does this show my child with dignity and respect?
- Is the information honest and clear about what the funds are for?
- Do I have the agreement of everyone with parental responsibility?
- Would this feel okay for my child to read in the future?

## Not sure? Just ask us – before you post.

We'd much rather you check with us first than worry about it afterwards. Your Family Support Officer is always happy to help.

Phone: 0330 043 5575

Email: [families@treeofhope.org.uk](mailto:families@treeofhope.org.uk)

Website: [www.treeofhope.org.uk](http://www.treeofhope.org.uk)



*Together, we can help your child reach their full potential.*