

# Social Media Use Policy

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## SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees (See Definition) of [Insert Practice Name].

## AUTHORISED BY

Practice Manager and Practice Principle

## PURPOSE

This policy defines the rules for each employee when engaging in social collaboration, regardless of toolset, forum or medium.

## BACKGROUND

[Insert Practice Name] recognises employees use social media and that the lines between work and home are becoming increasingly difficult to identify with the use of mobile devices.

Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal or professional capacity on any social media platform. This policy applies to [Insert Practice Name] employees, honorary appointments, volunteers, trainees and students.

This policy does not apply to staff members' personal use of social media platforms where they make **no real or perceived** reference to [Insert Practice Name], its staff, its clients, services, business partners, government, suppliers or other stakeholders.

## DEFINITIONS

### SOCIAL MEDIA

'Social media' describes the online and mobile tools that people use to share opinions, information, experiences, images, and video or audio clips and includes websites and applications used for social networking. People use social media to talk, participate, share, network and bookmark online. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts and other multi-media communications, and is also known as Social Networking. Common sources of social media include, but is not limited to:

- Email
- Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram)
- Video and photo sharing (Flickr, YouTube)
- Blogs, (personal, professional and those published anonymously),\
- Micro-blogging
- Online forums and discussion boards
- Wikis (Wikipedia)
- Podcasting

### EMPLOYEES

In this policy, employees include permanent staff and executives, contractors, temporary staff, trainees and students on placements.

## PRACTICE

In this policy, 'the practice' may be used interchangeably with the employers trading name: [insert practice name].

## POLICY

Where an employee's comments or profile can identify them as a [Insert Practice Name] employee, that employee:

- Must ensure any online communication is consistent with [Insert Practice Name]'s Code of Conduct, values, policies and applicable laws.
- Write on all postings that the stated views are your own and are not those of [Insert Practice Name].
- Must not imply you are authorised to speak as a representative of [Insert Practice Name].
- Must not make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to [Insert Practice Name]'s reputation or bring it into disrepute.
- Must not post material that includes confidential/proprietary information or trade secrets, or information that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, libellous, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, or sexist.
- Must not use any [Insert Practice Name] logos or insignia without written permission from the Practice Manager.
- Can only disclose and discuss publicly available information.
- Must adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination and other applicable laws, and [Insert Practice Name]'s Privacy of Health Records and Personal Information policies.

## COMPLIANCE

[Insert Practice Name] reserves the right to initiate action against any staff member, in accordance with the organisation's Disciplinary Procedure, who uses social media in a manner that could be considered inappropriate or not consistent with this policy or any other [Insert Practice Name] policy.

Management will consider the nature and severity of the post, the source of the post, whether [Insert Practice Name] was named, if the post is public, if other co-workers have seen the post, if [Insert Practice Name] or the Health industry has been damaged, and or if the comment was impulsive or deliberate when considering any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action in the event of a serious misconduct may include termination of employment or disengagement of external contractors.

## DISCLOSURE OF INAPPROPRIATE USE

Where an employee becomes aware of inappropriate or unlawful online content that relates to [INSERT Practice Name], or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy the situation and circumstances should be reported immediately to the Practice Manager.

## PROTOCOL

### [Insert Practice Name] related use

In some instances, an employee's supervisor may ask an employee to participate in an online forum in a [Insert Practice Name] job-specific capacity.

Prior to participation, the employee should:

- Discuss involvement with his/her supervisor
- Receive approval from [Insert Practice Name] 's [Insert Authorised Position].
- Ensure they are familiar with relevant policies and protocols, and agree on parameters for the project

## PERSONAL USE

This policy does not discourage nor unduly limit employees using social media for personal expression or other on-line activities in their personal life.

Employees should be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to [Insert Practice Name] that can occur, either directly or indirectly from their personal use of social media and should comply with this policy to ensure that the risk is minimised.

Employees are personally responsible for content published in their personal capacity on any form of social media platform. When in doubt, employees can seek guidance from the Practice Manager on how to comply with the following obligations.

To avoid breaching this policy employees must:

- only disclose and discuss publicly available information
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant practice policies and other legal and professional requirements
- expressly state that stated views are personal and are not representative of the practice
- behave politely and respectfully
- adhere to the terms of use for using the social media platform or website, and adhere to legislation including copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and any other applicable laws, and the Practice's Privacy Policy.
- do not refer to the practice, other staff or contractors without their approval. Do not criticise or denigrate the practice, its staff and contractors, or organisations it is professionally associated with.
- there should be no photos taken inside the workplace which could capture documents, paperwork, patient charts, or other information protected by

privacy law. Do not disclose any patient information without the express consent of the patient

- do not accept “friend” requests from people you know only as a patient of the practice.
- do not disclose any confidential information relating to practice systems.
- use of social media should not interfere with your work.

Employees must not:

- post material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful
- imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of the practice, nor give the impression that the views expressed are those of the practice
- use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor or other member of the practice
- use their practice email address or any practice logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of their personal comment
- use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in their capacity as an employee or contractor of the practice
- post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another employee or contractor of the Practice
- comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the practice's reputation or bring it into disrepute

When accessing social media while at work, you must do so in accordance with **[Insert Practice Name]**'s Internet and Email Usage policies, which requires you to use these resources reasonably, in a manner that does not interfere with your work and is not inappropriate or excessively accessed.

Examples of reasonable use include:

- Accessing Facebook during an official break time
- Replying to a family member's email
- Paying bills online during a meal break

It does not include promoting personal business or private enterprises.

## REFERENCES and ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

### [Insert Practice Name] Policies and Protocols

[Insert Practice Name]	Code of Conduct Policy
[Insert Practice Name]	Use of Email Policy
[Insert Practice Name]	Use of Internet Policy
[Insert Practice Name]	Use of Computers Policy
[Insert Practice Name]	Privacy of Health Records Policy
[Insert Practice Name]	Privacy of Personal Records Policy
[Insert Practice Name]	Bullying & Harassment Policy
[Insert Practice Name]	Staff Grievance Resolution Protocol

## LEGISLATION

- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Commonwealth)

## STANDARDS / CODES OF PRACTICE / INDUSTRY GUIDELINES

- [Social Media and the Medical Profession: guidelines for medical staff and medical students, Australian Medical Association](#)
- [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency \(AHPRA\) Social Media Policy](#)

[Insert Practice Name] has taken all reasonable steps in the development of this policy, to make its content consistent with the proper discharge of its obligations under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and all related state and federal laws.

## MODIFICATION and REVIEW

- The date the policy is due for review no greater than two years from the date of endorsement.
- The Practice Management Team is responsible for reviewing this policy.