Social Media Guidelines for SWSLHD Staff

NSW GOVERNMENT | Health South Western Sydney Local Health District

The growing use of social media and networking sites are providing us with ever increasing opportunities to keep in touch with friends and relatives. They are also powerful engagement tools to communicate with colleagues, stakeholders and the community.

Introduction

South Western Sydney Local Health District acknowledges the benefits of participating in social networks and online communities and encourages staff to engage in the every-day conversations taking place.

Social media includes blogs, podcasts, video and audio sharing sites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter - to name but a few.

The social media environment is relatively new and changing quickly. The comments you make either professionally or in a personal capacity could potentially be online permanently.

These guidelines have been produced to help employees to harness the benefits while minimising the risks of using social media. They will evolve and develop as we continue to learn, adapt and build on new ideas and innovations.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the SWSLHD Media and Communication Policy, The Code of Conduct and Information Management Policy.

Official Use of Social Media

To enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange the District supports planned official use of social media technologies.

The same standards of professional practice and conduct associated with all communication activities apply. Common sense and sound judgement are essential to avoiding contentious issues.

All proposals for social media activity should be presented for approval to the relevant senior executive or director and the SWSLHD Media and Communications Unit. The proposal should highlight who is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the social media channel along with its key aims and objectives.

Proposals will be reviewed against existing communication policies and campaigns.

Private Use of Social Media

The majority of people using online social networks do so to stay in touch with family and friends. You can share experiences, photographs and video of your latest holiday or nights out with friends. And you can share these experiences with more people than ever before. But you should consider that these experiences could potentially be seen by anyone with access to the internet. It is important that you 'know who your friends are' and most importantly understand your privacy settings.

Think carefully before you post and don't say, or show, anything you would not want printed on the front page of a newspaper or for an employer to see.

Both the Australian and New Zealand Medical Associations and the Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA) recommend against accepting 'friends requests' from former or existing patients as this can breach professional boundaries.

Some Simple Rules of Engagement

✓ Maintain patient confidentiality at all times – no matter how secure your privacy settings

✓ Abide by the law and respect copyright

✓ Obtain approval before setting up a work related/ hosted site

✓ Use common sense, be polite and treat people how you would like to be treated

✓ Make it clear the views expressed on self-hosted private sites do not represent the views of SWSLHD

✓ Ensure your online activities don't interfere with your job performance

✓ Don't say anything on a social networking site you would not want printed on the front page of a newspaper or for an employer to see

✓ If you experience a problem or identify an issue contact the SWSLHD Media and Communications Unit

✓ If you make a mistake be upfront and correct it quickly