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Social Networking/Media Use Policy Template

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1. Aim

To ensure that our service, children, educators or families are not compromised on any form of social networking or related website.

Four questions “...that any organisation should ask before developing a social media policy”¹ are:

1. Does this policy cover all relevant aspects of social media conduct by employees within your organisation?
2. How can you acquire the resources, the processes and the commitment from senior management to uphold this policy if it is breached?
3. What is the best way of communicating this to internal stakeholders?
4. How often will you update this policy to ensure that it stays relevant and current to your organisation and to the evolution of social media technologies?

2. Definition of Social networking sites

¹ “A Not for Profit Social Media Policy?” Sutherland, Karen
<http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2014/05/not-profit-social-media-policy#sthash.KILmne4V.vtnmON0j.dpuf>

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Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.²

3. Examples of problematic use

1. During a staff Christmas party, photographs are taken of staff drinking what appears to be alcohol, laughing and joking and playing pranks on each other. A staff member then uploaded the photos to the agency Facebook site.

A few days later parents of children attending the centre saw the photos, following which they lodged complaints that left a poor general impression of staff and the service. Additionally some staff appeared significantly affected by alcohol the night before they were to care for the children early the following day, raising questions about the ability of staff to appropriately care for children.

2. A staff member took 'selfies' while at work. The photos were automatically viewable on Instagram. Clearly visible in the background were children attending the service. Some of the children's parents had signed declarations that they did not wish images of their children to be accessible to persons inside or outside of the service.

In the same way that agency policies include dress policies, security and behaviour policies for the safety of staff and children, so too does an agency require social media policies for staff in relation to the children attending the service.

4. Related Policies

Australian National Quality Standards

QA4	4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
	4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of

² Boyd, D. M. and Ellison, Nicole B. *Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13 (2008), p211, International Communication Association. 210–230.

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		each other's strengths and skills
QA5	5.2.3	The dignity and the rights of every child are maintained at all times
QA6	6.1	Respectful supportive relationships are developed and maintained
QA7	7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service

Australian National Regulations

Regs 181	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider	
181- 184	Confidentiality and storage of records	

5. Who is affected by this Policy?

Children
Staff
Families
Management

6. Implementation

6.1 The policy relates to accessing and using social networking platforms and applications on any device such as desktop computers, mobile telephones and tablets.

6.2 Use of devices by students on placement requires prior service approval. The use of images of children at the service by students requires the approval of the relevant child's guardian. Images can only be used for assessment purposes.

6.3 Guardians of children attending the service will be requested to sign a social media and privacy agreement regarding the use of their child's image (still or motion) by the service. If the guardian has not signed an agreement the service will act as if the guardian does not wish images of their child to be used by the service in any fashion.

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6.4 In those instances in which a guardian has given permission for their child's image to be used by the service, the child shall have the final say as to whether they wish any particular image to be used. Children can also decide they do not wish any image to be used, even if permission has already been given by a guardian. In all instances the child's permission shall be sought prior to the use of any image and they shall be informed it is perfectly reasonable to say 'No'.

6.5 Only <enter title of position/s> can add or amend information on the service's social media sites without seeking prior approval.

6.6 Only <enter title of position/s> can provide permission to other staff to add or amend information on the service's social media sites.

6.7 Social networking websites should not be accessed while at work unless with the express permission of a supervisor.

6.8 Staff who can access a social networking site via their mobile phones are not to do so during their shifts at the service and are not to use their camera or video phones to take photos/pictures while at the service unless approval has been granted by a supervisor.

6.9 Unless by prior approval, no information about what happens at the service should be posted on a social networking website, nor should any photos taken at the service or on an excursion be put on a social networking website. If a staff member puts photos of a child or children enrolled at the service on a social networking website, families will immediately be contacted.

6.10 If possible, the social networking website will be contacted to delete the photos. The staff member will face an inquiry into their actions and possibly face termination of employment.

6.11 Please be aware that social networking websites are not a private means of communication but can be accessed by the public, therefore, it is important not to share private information about service families or other staff on social networking websites. A staff member doing so will face an inquiry into the situation by management and any involved party and depending on the severity of the situation face possible termination of employment.

6.12 Should harassment of any kind take place on a social networking site, such as, but not limited to, sexual or verbal harassment, staff will face an inquiry into their actions and depending on the severity of the situation face possible termination of employment.

6.13 Should a family member related to the service harass a staff member via a social networking website, management will conduct an inquiry into their actions and depending on the severity of the situation face possible termination of employment/termination of their child's place at our service.

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6.14 This policy also complies with state and national laws regarding social networking websites. Should a staff member break the law on a social networking website, such as, but not limited to, defamation, the service will contact the police and other relevant authorities.

6.15 Service policy should include which positions are authorised to make entries on social network

6.16 The service should review which photographs and images exist on the services social media sites every 2 years. Image of children that are more than 2 years old should be considered for removal.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and the review will include <Management, Employees, Families and Interested Parties>

8. Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next review	Approved by	Amendment
1	DD/MM/YYYY	DD/MM/YYYY		e.g. Paragraph 6.2 inserted
2	DD/MM/YYYY	DD/MM/YYYY		e.g. Removed paragraph 1.5
3	DD/MM/YYYY	DD/MM/YYYY		

9. Sources

National Quality Standard

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

<http://unicentre.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@unic/@mrkt/documents/doc/uow146319.pdf>

http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Induction_Handbook_lowres.pdf

<http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2014/05/not-profit-social-media-policy#sthash.KILmne4V.vtmON0j.dpuf>

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/oshc/pages/services/media/?reFlag=1>

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This policy document was developed by Network (<http://networkofcommunityactivities.org.au/>) 2015

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http://media.wix.com/ugd/76ebc5_644d8cc6b785864b988063b316616056.pdf