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Policy:

Social Media Policy

This policy applies to all workplace participants and outlines the expectations of both Tahmoor & Wollondilly Medical Centre

regarding social media use in connection with work, and identifies the risks associated with work and private social media use that might:

- impact the reputation or interests of the Practice;
- cause damage to the working relationship;
- impact on the safety of one or more workplace participants; and/or
- be incompatible with a workplace participant's duties and obligations, including other workplace policies of the Practice (such as the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy and the Practice's work health and safety policies).

While the Practice respects the rights of individuals to comment on and engage in public debate about political, social and other issues, the Practice expects workplace participants to act in a professional, ethical, responsible and courteous manner when using social media, particularly when such use has the potential to adversely affect the Practice and/or other workplace participants.

Social media has many forms. For the purposes of this policy, social media consists of websites and applications that allow users to create and share highly visible user-generated content and to participate in social networking. Social media includes, but is not limited to, Facebook (including Facebook Messenger), Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, Share, blogging, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites and wikis, however described.

This policy applies to social media use at all times, irrespective of whether:

- the social media use is during or outside working hours;
- the workplace participant is using technology equipment and/or devices provided by the Practice, the worker themselves, or a third party; and
- the workplace participant is located at the workplace or elsewhere.

The Practice may be vicariously liable for the conduct of a workplace participant on social media platforms, including personal social media accounts, where this usage impacts on the workplace. As such, workplace participants are required to take a conservative and cautious approach to compliance with this policy, and if in doubt about the Practice's expectations under this policy (or how this policy applies to any proposed or particular conduct or behaviour on a social media platform), must immediately contact the Practice Manager.

What are my obligations when using social media platforms?

When using social media platforms, all workplace participants must:

- not engage in any conduct or behaviour that is inconsistent or interferes with their duties to, or their relationship with, the Practice or may tend to bring the Practice into disrepute;

- where an individual could reasonably be identified as having a working relationship with the Practice, be polite, courteous and respectful of others and behave in a way that upholds the integrity and good reputation of the Practice;
- where an individual could reasonably be identified as having a working relationship with the Practice, not be vulgar, sexually explicit, obscene or deliberately provocative;
- not disparage, or unreasonably criticise, make false or misleading statement about, abuse, threaten, bully, harass, humiliate, victimise or discriminate against the Practice, other workplace participants and/or its patients;
- not use or disclose any of the Practice's confidential information, intellectual property and/or sensitive commercial information (or any third party's confidential information, intellectual property and/or sensitive commercial information obtained through or as a result of the individual's work at the Practice) unless expressly authorised by the Practice;
- not use or disclose any personal information of a patient of the Practice unless expressly authorised by the Practice and in accordance with privacy laws, including the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth);
- unless expressly authorised by the Practice, not imply that the Practice endorses their personal views or opinions;
- unless expressly authorised by the Practice, not use any email address provided to the individual by the Practice to register a personal social media account;
- comply with any relevant social media platform's terms and conditions of use;
- comply with all applicable Australian laws (including, but not limited to, criminal, intellectual property, defamation, privacy, equal opportunity, bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination and consumer protections laws) and any applicable court or tribunal judgements; and
- comply with any other workplace policies (including, but not limited to, the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy).

Can I use social media during working hours?

Occasional use of personal social media during working hours is permitted. However, when using social media in a private capacity during working hours:

- access should be brief and infrequent, and not undermine the performance of the individual's duties in any way;
- access should not interfere with the individual's work responsibilities or their colleagues; and
- workplace participants are required to comply with their obligations under this policy and any other workplace policies (including, but not limited to, the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy).

Before posting online in a private capacity, workplace participants should be mindful that:

- anonymity online is not guaranteed, and anyone who posts material online should assume that their identity and the nature of their work can be revealed;
- material posted online lasts forever and may be replicated endlessly, through sharing and re-posting;
- material posted online may also be sent to unintended or unexpected recipients, who may view that material out of context;
- the speed and reach of content posted on social media means that comments posted online are available immediately to a wide audience; and
- social media platform security settings are not a guarantee of privacy, and material posted in a relatively secure setting can still be copied and reproduced elsewhere without your prior knowledge or agreement.

What constitutes best practice when using social media?

When posting on social media, all workplace participants should be mindful to comply with the following practices:

- don't express your views as facts;
- don't post impulsively; and
- don't post when you are angry, upset or unsettled.

What happens if I don't comply with this policy?

A workplace participant who fails to comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of their employment or engagement.

A workplace participant who is suspected of breaching this policy must cooperate with any investigation conducted by or on behalf of the Practice, which may include preserving and not deleting relevant social media content, and by providing the Practice with reasonable access to such content. A failure to comply with such a requirement may, in itself, result in disciplinary action, including, in appropriate circumstances, termination of employment or engagement.

How will the Practice know if I haven't complied with this policy?

Workplace participants should expect that any information they create, post, exchange or discuss on social media platforms may be viewed by the Practice at any time without notice.

The Practice will, on a continuing and ongoing basis, monitor and review, without further notice, on a continuous and ongoing basis a workplace participant's activities using the Practice's IT resources and communication systems, including but not limited to social media postings, profiles and activities. The Practice may also conduct audits of social media platforms from time to time, including personal social media accounts.

The monitoring and/or audits will occur to ensure that workplace participants are acting in accordance with their duties and obligations to the Practice, including those arising under this policy and other workplace policies of the Practice, and for legitimate business purposes.

How do I make a complaint about social media use?

If a workplace participant is concerned that this policy has been breached, they should immediately contact the Practice Manager.

How do these guidelines interact with the Practice's other workplace policies and my terms and conditions of work?

This policy is not intended to be exhaustive and it does not override or otherwise displace any other obligations that a workplace participant owes to the Practice. Workplace Participants must never use social media in a manner that breaches this policy or any of the Practice's workplace policies, including, but not limited to:

- the Code of Conduct;
- the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy; and
- the Practice's work, health and safety policies.

If social media use would breach the duties or obligations of a workplace participant if carried out in the workplace, it will also breach those duties or obligations in an online forum.

This policy does not form part of any contract between the Practice and a workplace participant and is not, and is not intended to be, contractual in nature.

The Practice may amend, replace or withdraw this policy at any time.

Useful Resources

[The RACGP's Guide for the use of social media in general practice.](#)

[Recognise scam or hoax emails and websites \(Stay Smart Online\)](#)

Practice Specifics