**Canberra Health Services**

**Guideline**

**Use of Social Media**

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| Guideline Statement |

This guideline has been developed to inform Canberra Health Services (CHS) employees of their obligations and responsibilities, in the context of using social media when carrying out official duties or in their personal use of social media.

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| Scope |

This guideline applies to all CHS employees.

For the purposes of this guideline a CHS amployee includes the following:

* Full Or Part-Time Staff Member
* Volunteers
* Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs)
* Locums
* Students.

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| Section 1 – What is Social Media? |

Social media is defined as any website and application that allows users to create and share content and to participate in social networking. Social media for the purposes of this guideline can include but is not limited to:

* social networks, e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn
* media-sharing networks e.g Snapchat, Instagram, Soundcloud, Youtube, WhatsApp and Tik Tok
* bookmarking and content curation networks such as Pinterest
* corporate networks, e.g. SharePoint, Skype, Zoom, Cisco WebEx and Microsoft Teams
* microblogging and blogging networks, e.g. Twitter and Tumblr
* discussion forums, e.g. reddit, Quora, Digg
* wikis e.g. Wikipedia
* online gaming networks e.g. World of Warcraft and Second Life
* sharing economy websites e.g. Gumtree.

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| Section 2 – Official use of Social Media |

The standards of conduct and behaviour expected of CHS employees, as outlined by the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct, also apply when CHS employees (as defined in this guideline) are participating in personal or professional use of social media. Use of social media should also reflect and uphold CHS’ vision, role and values.

CHS employees must not speak on behalf of CHS unless specifically authorised to do so in performing their duties. Generally such authorisations are restricted to staff working in Communications and Engagement who manage the official CHS social media accounts.

Only authorised staff can respond to the public on behalf of CHS using social media. This includes responses from official CHS social media accounts.

CHS employees can obtain authorisation via the Communications and Engagement team, with approval from the relevant Executive Director/Executive Group Manager, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer.

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| Section 3 – Personal use of Social Media and making Public Comment online |

The [ACT Public Service Code of Conduct](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/363230/codeofcond2012_2013edit_wtables.pdf) recognises the ACT Public Service values and signature behaviours that ACT Government CHS employees are expected to demonstrate at all times.

CHS respects the right of its employees to participate in political, advocacy and community activities. In doing so, however, CHS employees must behave in a way that does not seriously call into question their capacity to act impartially in their work. It is also important that CHS’ reputation is not placed at risk by comments that our CHS employees make.

CHS employees should be aware that content published online and on social media is, or may become publicly available, even from personal social media accounts. CHS expects its CHS employees to take reasonable steps to ensure that any social media use or public comment they make, including online, falls within the following parameters.

CHS employees must ensure they:

* don’t use a work email address to register personal social media accounts
* don’t make comments that are unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to or about work, colleagues, peers, CHS or the ACT Government
* don’t make comments that are, or could be seen as:
* being made on behalf of CHS or the ACT Government, rather than an expression of a personal view
* sharing confidential information obtained through their employment (if an employee does so they may risk breaching section 9 of the *Public Sector Management Act* 1994 and this may result in disciplinary action being taken)
* compromising their capacity to fulfil duties as a CHS employee in an impartial and unbiased manner. This applies particularly where comment is made about CHS policies, programs and services
* so harsh or extreme in its criticism of the government, a Member of the Parliament from any political party, or their respective policies, that the employee is no longer able to work professionally, efficiently or impartially
* critical of CHS or ACT Government officers or staff
* critical of CHS clients or other stakeholders
* a gratuitous personal attack that is connected with their employment
* prejudicial to the integrity or reputation of CHS or the ACT Government
* compromising public confidence in CHS or the ACT Government.
* do not access social media for non-official purposes at times when they are on duty (i.e. employees are restricted to accessing social media during meal breaks or other times during their working day/shift when they are not on duty)
* respect CHS intellectual property (e.g. CHS in-house Information Technology systems) by not sharing intellectual property on social media without appropriate clearance
* that CHS’ reputation is not placed at risk by comments, photographs or other media that our employees make or upload on social media. Photographs of staff in the CHS workplace may be problematic, as it is possible that such photographs may incidentally capture patients, who may not have given their consent to the photo being posted, or may not even be aware that their image has been posted on social media
* are mindful that their behaviour is bound by [CHS values](https://healthhub.act.gov.au/news/our-values) and the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct at all times, even outside work hours and when material is posted anonymously or using an alias or pseudonym. CHS’ vision is summarised in the [HR Factsheet – CHS Vision, Role and Values](https://healthhub.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/(FS)%20CHS%20Vision%20Role%20and%20Values%201.0bt.pdf).
* make clear that any views expressed are their own and not those of CHS. However, this will not necessarily protect CHS employees from breaching the code. If an employee can be identified as working at CHS and they criticise CHS, the government, a Minister or a Directorate policy or service, it’s reasonable for people to question their impartiality and ability to do their job effectively.

CHS employees must at all times adhere to [section 9 of the *Public Sector Management Act* 1994](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1994-37/)*.* **A failure to adhere to section 9 may be considered misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being taken.** CHS employees who participate in online communication deemed not to be in the best interest of, or which has the potential to damage the reputation of, CHS may be subject to disciplinary action**.** CHS will remove, or request the employee to remove, any material where there is a breach of the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct or this guideline.

CHS employees participating in private online group chats which have been established to share information with colleagues in the workplace, must abide by CHS values and follow the protocols laid out in these guidelines.

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| Section 4 – Respecting Privacy |

Content published on the internet can remain public indefinitely. Content can also be replicated and shared beyond the original intended audience who may view it out of context or use it for an unintended purpose. For example, private messages or posts on a private Facebook group can be saved, screenshot and made public – with little potential for recourse.

Before posting to a social media site CHS employees should understand the tool/platform. They should also read the terms of service and user guides, and look through existing content to understand the posting etiquette and any cultural or behavioural rules or protocols associated with that platform.

CHS employees on clinical placement should not rely on a social media site’s default or adjustable security settings as any guarantee of privacy. Even if employees on clinical placement do not identify themselves online as a CHS or ACT Government employee, they could still be identified as one by other people. Posts can be traced back to individual CHS employees and they can be identified as an employee of CHS even if they were posted anonymously or using a pseudonym.

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| Section 5 - What if I see something inappropriate on social media from a CHS employee? |

If a CHS employee sees something which is posted on social media, from another CHS employee which might breach this guideline, the potential breach should be raised in the first instance with the manager of the CHS employee who has witnessed the potential guideline breach.

At the manager’s discretion, the issue may be raised with Canberra Health Services Workforce Relations phone: 512 49610.

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| Evaluation |

**Outcome**

* There will be a decrease in the number of reports received by Workforce Relations and/or Strategic Communications and Engagement relating to the misuse of social media by CHS employees.

**Measures**

* Both People and Culture and Strategic Communications and Engagement will maintain records of reported breaches of this guideline, and report to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer annually or as requested.

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| Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Legislation |

**Policies**

* ACT Government Use of Social Media Policy

**Procedures**

* Information and Communication Technology Resources – Acceptable Use

**Guidelines**

* CHS Delegations Manual

**Legislation**

* *Public Sector Management Act* 1997
* *ACT Public Services Code of Conduct* 2012

**Enterprise Agreements**

* All ACT Public Sector Enterprise Agreements 2018-2021

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| Definition of Terms |

**App** An abbreviation for "application." It is a piece of software which comes pre-installed on a device or it is software that can be installed.

**Blog** A blog is an online journal or informational website displaying information in reverse chronological order, with the latest posts appearing first, at the top. It is a platform where a writer or a group of writers share their views on an individual subject.

**CHS employees** In the context of this guideline, means a full or part-time staff member,volunteers, VMOs, locums and students on clinical placement.

**Instagram** A photo-sharing app which allows users to assign filters to photos and share them with followers.

**Media Sharing Network** A site or application that allows the sharing of photos, videos and other media.

**Microblog** is a combination of instant messaging and content production. With a microblog, you share short messages with an online audience to improve engagement.

**Pinterest** A visual discovery engine used for finding ideas such as recipes, home and style inspiration etc.

**Snapchat** A popular messaging app that lets users exchange pictures and videos (called snaps) that are meant to disappear after they're viewed.

**Social Network** a dedicated website or other application which enables users to communicate and connect with each other.

**Wiki** A collaborative tool that allows students to contribute and modify one or more pages of course-related materials. Essentially, it is a web page with an open-editing system.

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| Search Terms |

Facebook; network; blog; app; Snapchat; Instagram; Pinetrest; wiki; social media; Twitter

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*Policy Team ONLY to complete the following:*

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| *Date Amended* | *Section Amended* | *Divisional Approval* | *Final Approval* |
| *10/02/2021* | *Complete Review* | *Janine Hammatt, ED People and Culture* | *CHS Policy Committee* |
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*This document supersedes the following:*

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| *Document Number* | *Document Name* |
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