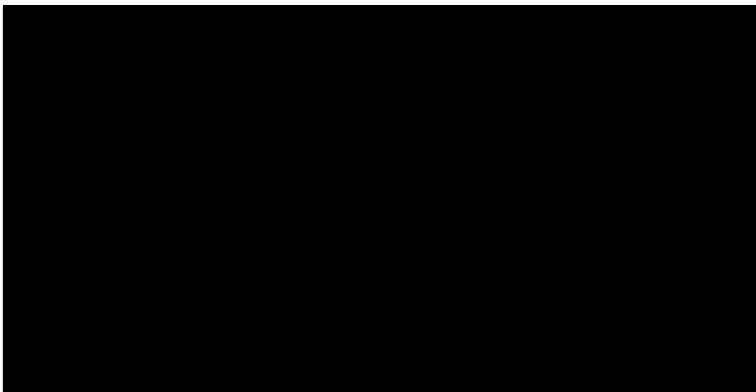


1 August 2019



Re: Official Information Act request – Staff disciplined for social media use

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 17 July 2019 requesting the following information

- 1. The number of staff employed by the DHB who have been disciplined for their social media use, during 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and in the year to July 1, 2019;**

2014 – 2

2015 – 0

2016 – 1

2017 – 0

2018 – 2

2019 – 0

- 2. A breakdown of what disciplinary action was sought in each case, for the above years;**

2014 – expectations set

2015 – n/a

2016 – expectations set

2017 – n/a

2018 – written warnings given to both employees

2019 – n/a

3. The number of complaints the DHB received regarding staff members' social media use, during 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and in the year to July 1, 2019;

We received one external complaint in 2018. All other social media complaints were brought to our attention internally.

4. And a copy/copies of any DHB policy relating to staff social media use.

The Auckland DHB takes any allegations of social media breaches seriously. The number of complaints outlined above are where a formal process has occurred.

Please find attached information relating to Social Media:

- Social Media Policy
- What is on our Intranet regarding Social Media (Hippo)
- Social Media Guidelines

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive

Social Media: rules of engagement

A guide for Auckland DHB staff



The Guideline's Purpose

Auckland DHB has a great deal of knowledge to share and our people are our best ambassadors. Social media is a rapidly changing area and one which we want to engage in to provide open and honest conversations with and between clinicians, other staff, our patients, families and community.

If used inappropriately, social media could pose significant confidentiality and privacy risks to both patients, the organisation and staff. Social media can blur the boundaries between professional accountability and personal life.

Information that is posted online is permanently archived, and once posted it is out of your control and can be easily shared with millions of people. It is important that each of us knows how to use these powerful digital tools responsibly and appropriately.

These guidelines are designed to provide best practices when using social media both in the workplace and in personal use. They are designed to empower, guide and protect you, as well as the organisation. These guidelines will be updated and amended as our involvement in social media grows.

Social Media and Other Relevant Policies

Here are some of the other policies you should become familiar with before using social media at work.

- [Standards of Conduct](#)
- [Internet use and Electronic mail policies](#)
- [Privacy of Patient Information](#)
- [Health Information Privacy Code](#)
- [Media Policy](#)
- [Clinical Record Management](#)

Staff Responsibilities

- Know and follow Auckland DHB's [confidentiality](#), [privacy](#) and acceptable use policies and guidelines (see above list).
- Individuals are personally responsible for the content they post online, and should use social media appropriately and at their own discretion.
- Individuals are responsible for protecting their accounts or mobile devices. You are advised to change passwords frequently, never share them with anyone and remember to log-out after use.
- Ensure that information provided about Auckland DHB and our partners is informed and factual.
- When stating opinions or comments, reiterate that it is your opinion and that it does not reflect that of your employer or its partners.
- If you see risky content or breaches of privacy and confidentiality, please contact the Communications team and, if necessary, the [Privacy Officer](#) immediately.
- Staff members are expected to maintain productivity if accessing social media at work. Individuals must prioritise time for patients and DHB-business in order to maintain a high level of safe, quality, patient-centered care.
- Be honest and thoughtful before posting and respect the online community.

- Beware that individuals may ask you for medical advice if you identify yourself as a healthcare professional online. Do not give medical advice, or comment on or reveal client's personal information online. Please refer the individual to the appropriate resource or service.

2. Be polite and respectful

- Be yourself and speak in a personable way. Listen to what others are saying - just as you would if you were having a face-to-face conversation.
- Be polite and considerate when engaging in conversations. Don't cross the line from healthy debate into a personal attack. Don't pick fights or engage in them.
- Avoid saying negative things about other organisations, colleagues or services. Social media is not the place to 'air your dirty laundry' or discuss private matters.
- Don't post defamatory, vulgar, obscene or threatening material. A good rule of thumb – don't post things that you would regret seeing on the front page of the NZ Herald with your name attached.
- Social media is a great way of sharing knowledge and opinions so when producing content for blogs and so on, encourage and invite people to respond.
- But be aware there are clear guidelines for what constitutes acceptable use, private use and unacceptable use. The internet policy states these clearly. What applies there, applies to social media. Social media is monitored by Auckland DHB.

3. Think critically before using

- Reflect on your intentions and the possible consequences before posting online.
- Who might be reading your post? Is your post appropriate? Would it offend anyone?
- When are you using social media? Personal use of social media should be managed on time away from work. Inopportune use of social media at work could be distracting and lead to errors. Serious errors or lack of care may be deemed as misconduct on investigation.
- Who are you wanting to connect to and why? Facebook might be more appropriate for friends, whereas LinkedIn might be more appropriate for professional relationships. Post your content accordingly.
- Why are you posting this information? Is it appropriate for the world-at-large or your manager or your patients to see?
- How would this post affect your relationship with others that might read your post? Does it affect your relationship with friends, colleagues, or patients?

3. Check and check again

- Consider what you say before you publish and remember that what you say will stay online for a long time. Don't publish something you might regret later.
- Double-check before you publish and if you're unsure about the facts don't publish.
- Don't forget to check your spelling and grammar.
- We all make mistakes. So when you do make a mistake, be quick to admit it and correct it. If it's a serious mistake that could damage your reputation, the reputation of Auckland DHB, lead to

unwarranted, critical media attention or legal action, speak to your manager and inform the Communications Team as soon as possible.

- Don't publish information that can be used to identify individual patients, unless you have their explicit consent. If you want to share a patient story with the goal of knowledge sharing, be sure to ask the patient first and have them sign a consent form.

4. Don't blur your professional and personal boundaries

Boundaries between personal and professional opinions can become blurred, just as they can in other conversations.

- When providing your own views and opinions you should make it clear that these do not represent the official views of Auckland DHB. If there are high profile or sensitive debates taking place in the social media space, check with the Communications Team before you publish your views.
- If you are publishing content relating to your work or about Auckland DHB make sure you identify that you are an Auckland DHB employee. Do not comment on Auckland DHB business directly to the media without checking with the Communications Team first. [Please see our Media Policy for more information.] Please represent us well. Make sure the content you publish is professional and accurate.
- Staff interested in participating in social media for work-related purposes must have engagements approved by Communications. (I.e. Tweeting or posting messages to Facebook as an official Auckland DHB representative or voice, or managing an Auckland DHB-related social media account.)
- Don't invite or accept patients or ex-patient requests on your personal social media channels. This may blur your professional boundaries. Be polite and explain why you are saying no. You may wish to set up separate social media channels so that you can upload professional information and contact patients through this channel. Refer to your own professions' social media guides first - see the links at the end of this guide for more information.
- The SMO multi-employer collective agreement has specific provisions regarding public comment. These provisions are taken to apply to social media, as do the agreement for SMOs to advise their employer of their intention to comment publicly.

5. Respect copyright

- Do not publish information that should not be made public. If you are not responsible for the information, ask permission to publish if it isn't already in the public arena. If in doubt, always seek advice.
- If you are using other peoples' content, acknowledge the source. It's good practice to link to other people's work. Show the proper respect for copyright laws.

6. Don't let social media interfere with your job performance

- Be mindful of personal time spent on social media at work.
- Social media can provide excellent opportunities for professional networking, ideas exchange and patient and community feedback. However, please ensure that your social media activity does not interfere with your work commitments.

7. React carefully to posts about Auckland DHB

Social media is a great tool for opening up communication but also requires some management to minimise the risk for Auckland DHB and individuals. We can't stop people expressing their opinions but we can correct error and mitigate damage to Auckland DHB's or an individual's reputation.

- If you see something risky or negative, monitor the situation and let the Communication Team know.
- If you see something inaccurately posted, check the facts and respond with a factual comment that can be seen by all - and let the Communications team know.
- Any criticism should be responded to in a thoughtful way, acknowledging alternative opinions and providing constructive comments.

8. How to effectively use social media for official Auckland DHB communication

- Before using social media sites for work purposes, make sure you have a plan. If warranted, include a benefit and risk assessment and identify the resources and commitments required to use social media successfully, just as you would with any other communications channel.
- If you decide it's appropriate to use social media for official department or service messages, make sure you get permission from your line manager. Ask the Communications Team for advice when planning. Remember that social media should form part of a communication plan and a copy should be run past and lodged with the Communications Team for review.
- Make sure you have a champion to keep the conversations going and monitor discussion. If you don't have the resource to maintain a constant presence – don't do it!
- If inaccurate information is being published by contributors to your site, make sure you put a post out there to correct it as soon as possible.
- Do not endorse products, services and organisations without seeking advice.
- You should include the Auckland DHB logo on any communication relating to the organization . . . Before doing so, please speak to the Communication Team so they can offer brand guideline advice.

9. Other useful sources of information

Social media and the medical profession:

- A guide to online professionalism for medical practitioners and students www.nzmsa.org.nz/resources/social-media-guide
- Social media and the nursing and applied health professions: a guide to online professionalism for nurse and nursing students which is applicable to allied health professions www.nzno.org.nz/services/resources/publications
- Social media in government: a hands on toolbox www.webtoolkit.govt.nz/files/Social-Media-in-Government-Hands-on-Toolbox-final.pdf
- Social media in government: high level guidance www.webtoolkit.govt.nz/files/Social-Media-in-Government-High-level-Guidance-final.pdf

- **Department of Justice (Victoria, Australia) Video for social media use in the workplace:**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iQLkt5CG8I>
- **Social Media revolution 2012 – Current State of Social Media:**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQzsQkMFgHE>

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Social Media

Overview

Document Type	Policy
Function	Workforce Services
Directorates	ADHB Wide
Department(s) affected	All ADHB services
Applicable for which Patients, Clients or Residents?	n/a
Applicable for which Staff?	All ADHB staff and partners
Keywords (not part of title)	Digital, online, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
Author – role only	Communications Advisor
Owner (see <u>ownership structure</u>)	Communications Director, Strategy, Innovation, Participation
Edited by	Document Controller
Date first published	May 2014
Date this version published	July 2014
Review frequency	3 years
Unique Identifier	PP01/STF/093

Content

This document covers the following topics relating to

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Social Media

Overview, Continued

Purpose

Social media tools in healthcare can enable engagement and increased conversation around improved, patient-centred care and services. If used inappropriately, the same technology and resources may pose significant confidentiality and privacy risks to both the organisation and its staff and patients. Social media can blur the boundaries between professional accountability and personal life. Not only is information posted online permanently archived, but once posted, it is out of individual control and can be easily shared with millions of people. Individuals need to know how to use these powerful digital tools responsibly and appropriately.

The purpose of this policy (the “Policy”) is to define acceptable conduct and practices for staff and affiliated partners using social media in order to:

- Ensure that individual use of social media is consistent with the reputation, values and goals of the organisation.
- Ensure that individual use of social media maintains professional boundaries and complies with professional and ethical obligations.
- Ensure that individual use of social media maintains confidentiality, privacy and complies with New Zealand law.
- Protect the reputation of the organisation and its employees.

Because of the evolving nature of social media, Auckland DHB may modify this policy at any time in order to mitigate risk and possible damage to the organisation.

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Social Media

Overview, Continued

Scope

This social media policy is intended to guide individuals, such as Auckland DHB staff members or Auckland DHB-affiliated person, (e.g. physician, student, researcher, volunteer, etc.) on how to interact in the virtual world in a way that reflects and coincides with professional expectations.

This policy applies to:

- All individuals affiliated with Auckland DHB, including, but not limited to staff, physicians, researchers, students, volunteers, patients, residents, family members, or members of the public.
- All types of social media websites, sharing of digital content, or means of mass communication, including, but not limited to the following:
 - External: email, blogs, Listservs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Foursquare, Vimeo, Pinterest, online forums, wikis, text messaging, or podcasts.
 - Internal: Employee blogs.

This policy maintains the following principles:

- Promote positive and supportive health communication and collaboration focused on connection, interaction, and communication between individuals.
- Promote appropriate social media usage which does not jeopardise the trust, or reputation of Auckland DHB, the healthcare profession, staff or individuals associated with Auckland DHB.
- Ensure appropriate and responsible use of social media in accordance with existing Auckland DHB policies (see policies listed in this document) and New Zealand legislation protecting privacy and governing publicly funded health and disability services.
- Ensure that social media policy and guidelines conform to industry, professional colleges and commonly accepted standards and best practices.

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Overview, Continued

Associated Documents The table below indicates other documents associated with this policy.

Type	Document Titles
Communications Guidelines	• Social Media: rules of engagement
	• A guide for Auckland DHB staff
Board Policies	• Standards of Conduct
	• Media Policy
	• Clinical Record Management
	• Discipline & Dismissal Policy
	• Information Systems Security
	• Internet Usage

Other relevant documents

- [Health Information Privacy Code](#)
- [Health and Disability Act](#)
- [Privacy Act](#)
- [Official Information Act](#)
- [Public Records Act 2005](#)
- [Trademark and Copyright Act](#)
- [SMO MECA collective agreement](#)
- A guide to online professionalism for medical practitioners and students
www.nzmsa.org.nz/resources/social-media-guide
- Social media and the nursing and applied health professions: a guide to online professionalism for nurse and nursing students which is applicable to allied health professions
www.nzno.org.nz/services/resources/publications
- http://www.nzno.org.nz/Portals/0/publications/social_media_for_nursing.pdf
- Nursing Council guide - <http://nursingcouncil.org.nz/News/New-guidelines-for-nurses-on-social-media>
- Social media in government: a hands on toolbox www.webtoolkit.govt.nz/files/Social-Media-in-Government-Hands-on-Toolbox-final.pdf
- Social media in government: high level guidance www.webtoolkit.govt.nz/files/Social-Media-in-Government-High-level-Guidance-final.pdf
- Department of Justice (Victoria, Australia) Video for social media use in the workplace:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iQLkt5CG8I>
- Social Media revolution 2012 – Current State of Social Media:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQzsQkMFgHE>
- [Ministry of Health Social Media Page](#)
- [Mayo Clinic Social Media Policy](#)

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Social Media

Overview, Continued

Definitions The following terms are used within this document.

Term	Definition
Social media	includes both Auckland DHB-affiliated social media, and non-Auckland DHB associated social media in which the staff member's relationship to Auckland DHB is recognised, identified, or assumed. These are methods of mass communication, including but not limited to, email, blogs, Listservs, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, online forums, wikis, text messaging, RSS feeds, video sharing, or podcasts.
Staff	all officers, directors, employees, contractors, consultants, physicians, healthcare professionals (e.g. nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, respiratory therapists), students, volunteers and other service providers engaged by the organisation.
Organisation	defined as Auckland District Health Board (Auckland DHB).
Confidential information	includes information and data, in any form or medium, relating to Auckland DHB, its business, operations, activities, planning, personnel, labour relations, suppliers and finances that is not generally available to the public and information that is identified as Confidential Information in accordance with Auckland DHB policies.
Personal Information	any recorded information about an identifiable individual (including, but not limited to patients, residents, tenants, volunteers, students, staff, physicians or members of the public), but it does not include business contact information (business contact information is information such as a person's title, business telephone number, business address, email or facsimile number).
Identifiers	any information including, but not limited to phone/fax number, email address social security number, medical record number, health plan beneficiary number, account numbers, certificate/license numbers, vehicle identifiers and serial numbers including license plate numbers, device identifiers and serial numbers, web universal resource locators (URLs), internet protocol (IP) address numbers, biometric identifiers including finger and voice prints, full face/partial photographic images, or any other unique identifying number, characteristic or code.

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Overview, Continued

Term	Definition
Internet	this refers to the global network of publicly accessible computers linked using the Internet Protocol standard.
World Wide Web (WWW or Web)	refer to Internet servers accessed via the Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP).
Email	An electronic message transmitted via the internet.
IMS	Information Management Services.
Publish	this refers to posting, commenting and sharing information online. When you hit "Enter" your message will be published in the digital world. Even after it is deleted, it is still traceable.
Spam	Unsolicited bulk email.

Authorised spokespeople and affiliated accounts

- Staff interested in participating in social media for work-related purposes (some individuals may be asked by leaders to participate in an official work capacity to share Auckland DHB activities or manage an Auckland DHB-related account) must have engagements approved by Auckland DHB Communications.
 - If you have been granted approval for managing an official department or program-specific social media account, (e.g. Twitter, blog or Facebook group/page) you must visibly display a disclaimer and Auckland DHB logo in the "About" or "Information" sections on the website. Auckland DHB reserves the right to monitor edit and remove inappropriate information and or contributions to corporate social media.
 - Using social media for work purposes should form part of a larger communications plan including a benefit and risk assessment, resources and commitments to ensure understanding and confirm that this is in fact the right tool for you.
 - Please consult with Communications if you would like to discuss how these tools could fit into your operations. Do not endorse products, services and organisations without seeking advice.
-

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Social Media

Responsibilities

Organisation

The organisation is responsible for:

- Defining, approving and updating social media guidelines and policies.
 - Ensuring privacy compliance and that guidelines and policies are defined for monitoring and auditing usage.
 - Ensuring that appropriate staff education and communication processes are provided to promote and increase awareness of policy and professional expectations.
-

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

Knowing and following Auckland DHB's social media policy and guidelines and understanding expectations of acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour related to social media use during work hours and outside of work hours.

Understanding confidentiality, privacy and acceptable use policies and guidelines.

- Being personally responsible for content posted online and should use social media appropriately and at their own discretion.
 - Being responsible for protecting their accounts or mobile devices; changing passwords frequently, never sharing them with anyone, and remembering to log-out after use.
 - Ensuring that information provided about Auckland DHB or its affiliated partners is informed and factual.
 - Reiterating that it is your opinion when stating comments or opinions and that it does not reflect that of your employer.
 - Contacting Communications if you see content that questions the DHB's credibility or that breaches privacy and confidentiality.
 - Maintaining productivity if accessing social media at work. Individuals must prioritise time for patients and DHB-business to maintain a high level of safe, quality patient-centred care.
 - Being honest and thoughtful before posting, and respecting the online community.
 - Being aware that individuals may ask for medical advice if you identify yourself as a healthcare professional online. Do not give medical advice, or comment on/reveal client's personal information online. Refer individual to appropriate resource.
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Social Media

Responsibilities, Continued

Prohibited activity

Staff are not permitted to:

- Use social media on the DHB's behalf for personal or monetary gain.
- Express personal views that conflict with Auckland DHB policies or government legislation.
- Defy any government legislation e.g. Copyright Act, Privacy Act etc.
- Expressing derogatory, inflammatory or offensive remarks.
- Distributing offensive material or images of patients or visitors who have not given their written consent.
- Disclose confidential patient or partner information [see section on security and confidentiality below].
- Take, share or post photos of patients online.

Doing so will result in consequences that could include termination. For more on actions relating to breach of policy see appropriate section at end of document.

The Auckland DHB reserves the right to request that certain subjects are avoided, to withdraw certain posts, and remove inappropriate comments. Content submitted for posting that is deemed not suitable for posting by the Communications department because it is not topically related to the particular social networking site objective will be withheld.

Ethical and legal considerations

- Staff have a professional and ethical obligation to protect the public as outlined by the respective association or college's standards of practice.
- Staff members have a legal obligation to protect confidential and personal information as per the Official Information Act, Health Information Privacy Code and Privacy Act.
- Staff members are legally responsible for online postings. Individuals need to be aware of legal considerations and risks regarding content, copyright infringements, intellectual property, disclosure laws, fair use, inaccurate information, defamation, victimisation, discrimination, harassment, or any other applicable law.
- Staff members should not post confidential or copyrighted data.
- Beware of copyright infringements when posting content.

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Responsibilities, Continued

Security and confidentiality

- Auckland DHB staff or affiliated partners are not permitted to share work-related, commercially or clinically-sensitive material or information through any web page, internet site, or 'blog' page or social media tool.
- Do not post photos of your ID badges where your name and ID number are visible – for security reasons.
- All new employees sign a confidentiality agreement when starting employment with Auckland DHB. This is kept on file. This confidentiality agreement applies to all professionally-related activity and information including conversations and engagement online.
- Internet postings should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the DHB or to any third party that has disclosed information to the DHB.
- Do not post comments or pictures with identifiers, such as names, contact information, diagnosis, history, vital signs, medications etc., or any other such information which could allow a specific person to be identified.
- Do not post or make comments on behalf of Auckland DHB without obtained consent from Auckland DHB Communications (Refer to section on authorized spokespeople).
- Details or pictures about a patient, resident, or family can be released to social media only with the signed consent from the individual or adult guardian.
- Anyone interviewed inside an Auckland DHB facility for social media purposes should be made aware he or she is being interviewed or photographed, and given the opportunity to formally consent or decline.

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Responsibilities, Continued

Privacy

- The same privacy rules apply for social media as they do in the workplace. (See relevant codes and policies listed earlier in this document).
 - Privacy for others – staff must be aware of the Health Information Privacy Code (1994) if they are using social media or any other means (e.g. search engines like Google) to search for patient information. They must consider the purpose of this information. The Privacy Code (Rule 8) specifies that if information is not obtained directly from the patient or client that it must be confirmed as accurate, complete and relevant with the patient or client and that this must be documented.
 - Consider how your use of social media could affect your relationship with your patients.
 - Privacy for yourself – be aware and protect your own private information.
 - Do not use or post Auckland DHB emails on social media, and do not use Auckland DHB email accounts to create online accounts, unless approved by the organisation as official DHB accounts.
 - Ensure that privacy settings are set to a personal or high level, and only add contacts that you personally know.
 - Organise your contacts appropriately. Some individuals are better suited for professional groups, (eg. LinkedIn), whereas others for social groups, (eg. Facebook). ie. Refrain from “friending” patients on social networks.
 - There is no such thing as “private” social media – posted content is open to anybody, and can be copied and pasted or forwarded to anybody.
-

Transparency

- If you post about Auckland DHB or Auckland DHB-related matters, acknowledge your title and affiliation with Auckland DHB.
 - Include a disclaimer such as: “The views I share are mine and do not reflect the views of my employer.” Also state this in the "About Me" section or profile.
 - Be clear that you are not speaking on behalf of Auckland DHB, and write in first person (eg. use “I”, “me”, “mine” etc., not “we” or “out”).
-

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Social Media

Responsibilities, Continued

Credibility and accuracy

- Be able to support yourself by double-checking information and sources before posting online. This is easier than issuing a retraction or an apology for misinformation later, and maintains professional credibility.
 - If you are uncertain about how to address a professionally-related question posed to you, it's best to say you are not sure, and refer to your leader or a member of the Communications team for assistance.
 - Speak with authority about things you are knowledgeable about, and speak less about things you are not.
-

Monitoring and disclosure

- Social media access may be provided as a business tool. In this event, Auckland DHB is entitled to access and monitor information about use, and any material, or information about material, generated or accessed by their employees on Auckland DHB systems.
 - Auckland DHB can be required to disclose information to law enforcement, regulatory agencies, under Official Information Act 1982 requests, and discovery actions in litigation. Please note that Official Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
 - Auckland DHB monitors online mentions of the organisation and all related services in order to address issues and help provide the best possible care. In this manner, the organisation may become aware of personal social media use that conflicts with staff policy and guidelines and act accordingly. Auckland DHB reserves the right to monitor public use of social media at any time.
 - Auckland DHB requires that social media content be recorded and archived when a social media transaction:
 - is required to support a legal, compliance or regulatory request or defence.
 - relates to a distressed user.
 - relates to a direct and formal complaint.
 - relates to a breach in Social Media Policy, with potential legal liability stemming from the misuse of social media.
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Social Media

Responsibilities, Continued

**Professionalism
– best practices**

- Use suitable communication channels for discussing, sharing, or reporting workplace issues, instead of publicly online.
 - Use correct and appropriate grammar if identifying yourself as a healthcare professional, or representing the organisation.
 - Keep any online communications brief, factual and objective.
 - Content posted online could be shared with millions of people, so be respectful when referring to or conversing with patients, health professionals, professions, or the organisation.
 - The way you conduct yourself, post and interact online not only affects the reputation, confidence and trust of your profession or organisation, but also reflects your character.
 - Treat what you say online as the equivalent and with the same level of respect as what you say in-person to your colleagues or clients.
 - Be smart – “Liking” an individual’s disrespectful comment can be viewed as the equivalent of posting the comment yourself.
 - Respectfully communicate and set professional boundaries with clients and patients to maintain a distinction between professional and personal life, just like in the workplace.
 - Anticipate friend requests from patients/clients – it is advisable to not add individuals as “friends” as it will affect the patient-healthcare provider relationship.
 - If engaging on a social/personal level with individuals, please end professional responsibilities and communicate this fact.
 - Exercise control and do not “react” immediately if you read something that gets you fired up. You do not want to regret something you posted, as everything posted online is archived forever, even if you delete it.
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**Offensive
material**

- Employees must not download, view or share obscene, offensive, insulting, harassing, sexist, pornographic, sexually explicit, or otherwise inappropriate messages, content, graphics, files or images.
 - The display of any kind of offensive material constitutes a direct violation of this policy.
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Social Media

Responsibilities, Continued

Comment policy Any Auckland DHB social media pages (such as LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter) have been created to encourage open discussion about issues important to our mission and our population's health. We respectfully ask everyone to honour the following guidelines when commenting on these pages.

- No foul, discriminatory, defamatory, libellous or threatening language.
- No invasion of privacy.
- No racially, ethnically, homophobic or otherwise objectionable language.
- Do not post material in violation of trademark or copyright laws or other laws.
- Comments should be relevant to the post.
- No attacks that identify individuals, companies, unions or other organisations.
- No spam or flooding of advertisements or solicitations.
- Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in being blocked from posting on Auckland DHB social media pages or any other social media collaboration sites provided by the DHB and possible disciplinary action.

Our commenting guidelines as posted on our social media accounts:

Be polite and respectful. You are welcome to agree or disagree with people and to debate any issues raised, but please respect other people's views. Don't cross the line from healthy debate into a personal attack.

Don't post defamatory, vulgar, obscene or threatening material. A good rule of thumb – don't post things that you would be embarrassed to have your mum see. Do not post comments which breach the confidentiality of our patients, their relatives, staff or other individuals.

Any content that does not abide by the rules of engagement will be removed.

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Social Media

Responsibilities, Continued

Breach of Policy Individuals need to be mindful of the ethical and legal implications that inappropriate use of social media can have. Failure to use social media appropriately may result in serious disciplinary measures from the organisation or regulating college, up to and including termination of employment, the right to practice, or legal action.

As per the organisation's code of conduct and other related policies (*Refer to section 24 Reference Information and Relevant Policies*), Auckland DHB expects all staff to conduct themselves with the highest standards of conduct with respect to ethical and professional behaviour amongst themselves and with clients, patients, residents and other members of the public.

- A breach or suspected breach of this policy or any of its components must be reported to the Auckland DHB HR Manager, relevant Information Manager, and Communications Team who will liaise with the Auckland DHB IS Security Team.
 - Disciplinary action may be taken for any breach of this policy including minor breaches of a persistent or repeated nature (which will in appropriate circumstances be treated as serious misconduct) as per the relevant Discipline & Dismissal Policies.
 - Auckland DHB is entitled as an employer to assess relevant information and communication, including social media, when conducting an investigation into the conduct of its employees, particularly where employee safety is a relevant concern.
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Social media

We have a great deal of knowledge to share, and our people are our best ambassadors. Social media is a powerful tool to help us spread the word, creating open and honest conversations between health professionals, patients, families, and communities.

However, inappropriately used or incorrectly managed social media can risk organisational and personal reputations. So, if you are considering using social media for work-related campaigns or projects, please read the social media guidelines and contact the Communications Team for advice.

Social media guidelines

The Auckland DHB Social Media guidelines provide best practices when using social media both in the workplace and for personal use. They are designed to empower, guide and protect you, and our organisation.

Social media policy

The Auckland DHB Social Media policy sets out acceptable conduct and practices for employees and affiliated partners using social media. The aim is to ensure that individual use of social media is consistent with the reputation and goals of the organisation, maintaining professional boundaries and complying with professional and ethical obligations. Our policy outlines expectations and responsibilities, prohibited activities, ethical and legal considerations. If you use social media please read this policy.

Taking photos in hospital

With the rise in personal handheld devices - such as tablets and smartphones - we must protect the privacy of our patients, visitors and staff. Visitors and patients should seek permission before taking photos and posting them online. You can download a poster to remind people to consider privacy when taking photos [here](#).

Personal use of social media

Where you identify yourself as an Auckland DHB employee, either through a bio, comments, or by using your DHB email address, please add a disclaimer such as:

- "The views and opinions expressed here are my own"
- "Opinions are my own"

Take a read through our policy and guidelines for advice and best practices for using social media and understand Auckland DHB's expectations for professional use.

Respect everyone's privacy

Please ask permission before taking photos or recordings of patients, visitors, or staff.



Think twice before posting anything online.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact the Communications Team.

Related documents

- Auckland DHB social media guidelines
- Auckland DHB social media policy
- Social media case studies
- Auckland DHB guide - responding to posts
- A guide for medical practitioners and students (NZ and Australia)
- A guide for nursing and applied health professionals

Useful links

- Social media use in the workplace (Wdeo)
- New Zealand government social media toolkit
- Ministry of Health social media page

