



Operational Directive

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OD number: OD: 0656/16

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Supersedes: OD 0326/11

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Subject: **EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to advise employees of their responsibilities when engaging in the use of social media. It aims to ensure employees are not engaging in online communication that is disparaging towards WA Health, its patients and/or its employees, in connection with the workplace.

Social media can be described as all online media communication platforms which allow for user participation and/or interaction. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Bebo), video sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Blip, Instagram), micro-blogging sites (e.g. Twitter, Yammer), blogging platforms (e.g. WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr), discussion forums (e.g. TroveForum, Yahoo! Groups, Google Groups), online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia) and any other web sites that allow users to publish comments and/or images (e.g. wikis).

Disparaging communication refers to online communication that is negative, adverse, inappropriate, offensive, indecent, unwanted, discriminatory, threatening, abusive and /or unlawful. The use of social media to make disparaging comments or post disparaging images about WA Health, its patients and/or its employees may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with the WA Health Misconduct Policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff engaged by WA Health employing authorities including: Child and Adolescent Health Service, Department of Health, Health Support Services, North Metropolitan Health Service, PathWest, Peel Health Services Board, South Metropolitan Health Service and WA Country Health Service.

POLICY

This policy covers all online communication via social media made by an employee, whether it is during work hours on a work computer, during work hours on a personal electronic device, outside work hours on a work computer or outside work hours on a personal electronic device. Prohibited online communication via social media includes, but is not limited to, disparaging online communication in connection with WA Health, which:

- reveals confidential, proprietary, non-released company information concerning WA Health and/or its business operations;
- reveals private confidential personal information about an employee or patient;
- may be construed as discriminatory or bullying;
- bullies, harasses, vilifies or discriminates against WA Health, its patients and/or its employees;
- criticises WA Health, its patients and/or its employees, offends others and breaches employment obligations in a public way;
- is defamatory;
- is rude, offensive or threatening towards WA Health, its patients and/or its employees;
- publicises or comments on workplace disputes;
- has the potential to adversely impact the professional reputation and/or the productivity of WA Health; or
- uses the WA Health name in connection with any of the prohibited forms of communication outlined herein.

An employee who engages in online communication to make disparaging comments or post disparaging images about WA Health, its patients and /or its employees may be in breach of this policy. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the WA Health Misconduct Policy which may include termination of employment.

Although pervasive, systematic and ongoing surveillance of staff internet access logs will not occur, WA Health may monitor or investigate staff internet access. This will only occur to confirm compliance with the requirements of this policy.

This policy is not intended to limit acceptable use of social media. For information regarding acceptable use, please refer to the [Social Media Guidelines](#) published by the Communications Directorate, who are responsible for social media engagement;
<http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/Communications/social/all.cfm>

Prohibited online communication via social media sites may also be in contravention of:

- WA Health Code of Conduct;
- WA Public Sector Code of Ethics;
- *Public Sector Management Act (WA) 1994*;
- The Acceptable Use Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy – Information and Communication Technology
- WA Health Misconduct Policy
- Policy on Use of Official Information and Public Comment
- WA Health policies, including the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination in the Workplace Policy; and

- Health Services policies, including confidentiality policies.

Any queries regarding this Directive can be sent to industrial.relations@health.wa.gov.au.

DR DJ RUSSELL-WEISZ
DIRECTOR GENERAL

This information is available in alternative formats for a person with a disability.