



Policy 4.11

The Use of Social Media

The intention of this policy is to establish a culture of transparency, trust and integrity in social media activities and to encourage the integration of social media into our teaching and learning environments.

Social media (sometimes referred to as 'social networking') are online services and tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information. Social media can improve both communication with parents/carers and learning and development for children and young people.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working within the centre who use a social media platform in their professional capacity. It has been developed to assist staff members to use social media to:

- Engage internally with staff or within the wider community as a communications tool
- Showcase children learning
- Integrate with, and facilitate teaching and learning
- Administer social media platforms in an authorised capacity, or make contributions in a professional or personal capacity on education-related issues

TWCCC has built a social media presence as a CLOSED Facebook page. We find that this can be a very effective tool for communication and relationship building with our community/stakeholders. TWCCC has set rules and guidelines about its use and monitors its content. Permission needs to be given by page administrators for people to gain access. Only once approved can they see the content or respond. The membership of the group is limited to CURRENT, IMMEDIATE family members/guardians of children in care. This is reviewed at the end of every year. We recognise that not everyone uses social media, and will continue to use other mechanisms for important information such as newsletters.

Staff members must ensure approval has been granted for social media activity from the Director/Assistant Director.

Social media administrators/user's should:

- Be familiar with the social networks and how they function
- Have an understanding of the code of conduct and ethical/professional behaviours of the organisation
- Consider duty of care, privacy, confidentiality and sensitive content
- Have the authority to respond to feedback and inquiries
- Know when to ask for advice from others (eg. About content of response, how to respond or legal/ethical advice)
- Know when to escalate the matter to the Director for response
- Be confident in uploading or linking to files
- Know how to link to other online content (eg. Web pages, videos, images)

Ideas of what might be posted on this page include:

- Events – share events happening at TWCCC or broader community that are relevant to families.
- Articles/reports – that are relevant to families
- Children's projects/activities
- Information for parents – reminders about events and activities, ask for feedback, call for volunteers, share information from other sources that may be of interest to families.

Vulnerable children and people need special consideration and can be defined as those whose circumstances place them at increased risk of harm when using social media. This may include children under court orders where contact between a child and another person, including a family member may be unlawful, eg. Children under the Guardianship of the Minister, children subject to a Witness Protection Order; children subject to a Family Court Order.

Only photographs with children in groups are to be used. Photos of single students should be avoided.

Speak positively to and about children and their families/carers in online environments. Be respectful and professional in your duty of care and when communicating and referring to children, parents/carers and their families.

If you are authorised to comment as a Two Wells Community Children's Centre representative, you must not:

- post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful
- use or disclose any confidential or secure information
- Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the Two Wells Community Children's Centre's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

Personal use of social media

The Two Wells Community Children's Centre recognises that staff may wish to use social media in their personal life. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit your personal expression or online activities.

However, you should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the Two Wells Community Children's Centre in certain circumstances via your personal use of social media as an early childhood professional and when you can be identified as a Two Wells Community Children's Centre employee.

Staff in education and care settings are expected to model responsible and respectful conduct to the children and families with whom they work. Staff need to consider the



electronic social environments they utilise as part of this community and employer expectation.

The internet does not provide the privacy or control assumed by many users. Staff must appreciate that no matter what protections they place around access to their personal sites, their digital postings are still at risk of reaching an unintended audience and being used in ways that could complicate or threaten their employment.

Staff should be aware of the following expectations in considering their use of social networking sites:

- They have considered the information and images of them available on their sites and are confident that these represent them in a light acceptable to their role in working with children and young people.
- They do not have children or young people in their education community as 'friends' on their personal/private sites. Staff should think carefully about the parents/carer's associated with the Centre that they choose to make connections with on social media.
- Comments on their site about their workplace, work colleagues or children, if published, would not cause hurt or embarrassment to others, risk claims of libel, or harm the reputation of the workplace, their colleagues or children.

Educator's and other staff can be held accountable for their actions outside of business hours.

Staff Team Messenger Applications

As part of our ongoing communication for educators and staff, we have 3 online conversation groups. You are invited to join these groups by either of the services Directors once, you have settled into your role at the centre.

The Scope of these groups:

These 3 online conversation groups are broken into three areas, kindy, childcare and whole site. Depending on which service you work will depend on which group you are joined to. All employees are joined to the whole site group conversation.

The Purpose of these groups:

The purpose of these groups is to create greater capacity for communication and consultation with and between employees. Examples of topics may include but not limited to: Routine changes, centre events, notification of staffing changes, forgotten jobs, reminders, professional articles, wellbeing quotes, consultation questions etc.

Information about children can be shared if it is something that **all educators** should be informed of: for example: allergy updates or changes, diet changes, important medical info. Just the child's first name will be referenced. (A good way of looking at it is, could this be a safety issue if not everyone knew about it? If yes, you should share it.) The educator who receives the information from the parent/carer is responsible for documenting this in the day diary and informing the centre cook where applicable. This conversation group does not eliminate the use of the day diary. The day diary is the preferred method of informing educators of any changes. The conversation group should be used as a last resort. Directors will manage the group members.

This will ensure all educators are given the same updated information on children immediately.



PLEASE TAKE NOTE: information must be factual, respectful, professional, and non-judgemental. All online written information can never be removed and all online written information on social media can be subpoenaed to court proceedings.

Compliance

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute

- a breach of employment or contractual obligations,
- misconduct,
- sexual harassment,
- discrimination,
- bullying,
- Or some other contravention of the law.

Those who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment or engagement.

Parents/Carers/Families

Need to be made aware that: if at any time, they take photos of any children other than their own at TWCCC, they must not post it on any social media platforms without the permission of the other child/children's parents/carers.

Governing Council Member's Signature: _____

Director's Signature: _____

Two Wells Community Children's Centre's Common Seal

Date Reviewed: June 2018

Next Review Due: June 2020

Sources: Department of Justice Social Media Policy for Employees, April 2011
<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/justlib/DOJ+Internet/Home/About+Us/Our+Values+and+Behaviours/Social+Media+Policy/>
[Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media)
DECD Social Media Guideline 2015
DECD Social Media Policy 2015