



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

RATIONALE/ PURPOSE:

This policy includes guidelines on using social media and accessing social media sites as a Northland District Health Board (Northland DHB) employee, volunteer, locum, student or contractor (all referred to in this policy as employee) and is aligned with Northland DHB’s [Code of Conduct](#).

As the lines between private, personal life and public professional life are becoming more blurred, you must take care when using social media.

POLICY STATEMENT:

While staff have the same rights of free speech and independence in the conduct of their private affairs as other members of the public, Northland DHB has expectations of a Northland DHB employee using social media in a personal capacity.

Northland DHB and each staff member need to be protected while leaving people free to make their own responsible choices about what they publish on social networks.

Posting on a publically available social media site on behalf of Northland DHB for work reasons must be an authorised by a media spokesperson.

SCOPE: Applies to all Northland DHB employees, including students, contractors and consultants.

DEFINITIONS: Social Media – primarily internet and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information. The term most often refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction, alongside the construction of words, pictures, video and audio.

References and associated documents:

- Social media and the nursing profession: a guide to online professionalism for nurses and nursing students. *A joint resource developed by NZNO; NETS; NZSU*
- Guidelines social media and electronic communication. . *Nursing Council of New Zealand*
- Social media and the medical profession: A guide to online professionalism for medical practitioners and medical students. *A joint resource developed by AMA; NZMA; NZSMA; AMSA*
- Northland DHB: [Code of Conduct](#).
- Northland DHB: [Media](#)
- Health Information Privacy Code 1994
- District Health Boards Social Media Guide – February 2014

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Authored by	C. McKerrow, Liz Inch		Reviewed by	OMG	
Authorised by	Organisational Management Group		Document ID	ORG-MED100-V3	



Safe social networking/media guidelines

The following guidelines are about the use of social media websites such as MySpace, Bebo, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and wikis.

What these guidelines are about

These guidelines are about **personal** use of social media. Sometimes, social media is used for work purposes. For example, some information is posted to correct a misunderstanding about the organisation. As with any statement to any media, this should only be done by someone authorised to do so. Talk to a member of the communications team before using social media for work purposes. See [Northland DHB Media Policy](#)

These guidelines don't cover this issue, but your manager will be able to tell you what 'reasonable use' is in the context of your own work.

Summary of these guidelines

Because of the ease in publishing information about oneself or one's views, it's important to remember that:

- a) You have agreed to obligations outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- b) Your online profiles and your contributions to any forums or blogs are public.
- c) Even social media sites that are restricted to your 'friends' are in effect public, as you cannot control what your 'friends' do with the information
- d) You need to protect the organisation's reputation and security, as well as your own personal privacy, reputation and security.

Guideline details

1. You have agreed to obligations outlined in the Code of Conduct.

You are obliged to observe the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The expectations are as a Northland DHB staff member you:

- behave with professionalism and integrity
- do not do anything that might bring Northland DHB into disrepute through your private activities do not compromise security.

2. Online profiles and contributions to any forums are public.

The Code also addresses two other issues about expectations around staff behaviour particularly relevant to the use of social media:

- **Media statements:** only authorised employees can comment on Northland DHB matters to the media. It does not matter if the media is the *New Zealand Herald*, a church newsletter or your own Bebo site. It is still media accessible to the public, and the policy applies.
- **Individual comment:** as an individual, refrain from comment or criticism of the organisations policies with which you might be associated in an official capacity, or where the news media might imply some such association.

3. Protect your privacy, your reputation and your security.

- Don't post anything that would embarrass you later. It's easy to think that only your friends are looking at your profile page, but it may be that anyone can see it. Do **not** post a photo or

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Feb 2019

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Feb 2021

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29/03/2020



information you wouldn't want to see as part of a story about you or the organisation on TV news or the front page of the *New Zealand Herald*.

- Be careful how you talk about your work. If your job involves security or money (e.g. passports, citizenship, payroll) do NOT identify your job specifically. It's ok to say you work for Northland DHB – but you should NOT give the area you work in, or make derogatory comments about your day at work or matters relating to your work, work colleagues or employer
- Be wary of publishing any identifying information about yourself – this includes phone numbers, your address and pictures of your workplace or home. This ensures that you:
 - protect your reputation
 - protect yourself from the possibilities of identity theft
 - protect yourself from being in a position where you might be placed under pressure
- If you are identified as a staff member on line you should act responsibly and uphold the reputation of your profession.
- Once information is on line it is almost impossible to remove and can quickly spread beyond a person's
- Learn how to use the site. Use the privacy features on the site you use to restrict strangers' access. Be guarded about who you let join your network control.
- If a patient / consumer requests you as a friend on a social networking site it is advisable not to establish this contact.

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4. Respect patients / consumers' privacy and confidentiality

- Maintain confidentiality and privacy of patients / consumers by not discussing them or practice issues in public places which include social media. Even when names are not used a patient / consumer may be identified.
- Any patient / consumer health information learned by Northland DHB staff during the course of health care must be safeguarded.

5. Respect your colleagues to best meet patients / consumers' needs

- Be respectful to your employer, colleagues and other health providers in all communications or posts.
- Staff utilising public platforms such as social media to express their opinion (which all people have a legal right to doⁱ)

6. Protection for staff from social media exposure at work

- It is expected that the general public gain consent from staff, visitors or other patients / consumers prior to taking photos / videos on their personal electronic devices.

See attached poster

ⁱ Everyone has a right to express their opinions as contained in the Bill of Rights Act, 10990 and to freedom from discrimination based on political opinion contained in the Human Rights Act 1993

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General Guidance about taking Photographs and Video in Hospital

Northland DHB recognises that on special occasion's patients and their families may wish to take photographs or video of themselves while in hospital e.g. the birth of a baby.

As far as possible we would like to accommodate those wishes, but in doing so we must take into consideration the needs and feelings of other patients and staff in that clinical area or ward.

Please adhere to the following advice:-

1. It is important that the senior staff member on duty gives permission for the images to be taken;
2. Take images only of yourself or your relative. Be aware of other patients / visitors / staff who may appear in the background. They need to agree to their photograph or video being taken;
3. If permission has been given for a video with sound to be made, it will record all the sounds in that area and we advise that where possible, this should be undertaken in an area away from the ward or clinic;
4. Staff must be asked for their permission to be recorded and their wishes must be adhered to;
5. The use of images or sounds against Northland DHB's advice or without the appropriate consent may be in breach of the Privacy Act 1993.

The above advice applies to all image capture devices including mobile phones.

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