



# Social media policy

**Current as of:** 04/02/2020

**Version No:** 1

## 1. Background and rationale

Social media and its use by individuals and organisations are continually growing and user-generated content, such as social networking sites, websites, discussion forums and message boards and blogs also continue to proliferate as forms of information exchange.

As such, health professionals need to maintain professional standards and be aware of the implications of their actions online. Regardless of whether an online activity is publicly available or limited to a specific group, health professionals need to be aware that information circulated on social media may end up in the public domain and remain there. Health practitioners should be aware of their ethical and regulatory responsibilities when they are interacting online, just as when they interact in person.

## 2. Policy

‘Social media’ is defined as online and mobile tools and social networks that are used to disseminate information, share opinions, experiences, images and video through online interaction.

Regardless of whether social media is used for business related activity or for personal reasons, the following standards apply to members of our practice team. Practitioners and team members are legally responsible for their postings online. Practitioners and team members may be subject to liability and disciplinary action including termination of employment or contract if their posts are found to be in breach of this policy.

## 3. Procedure

Our practice has appointed Zakea Pongritz (Personal Assistant) as our social media officer with designated responsibility to manage and monitor the practice’s social media accounts. All posts on the practice’s social media websites must be approved by this person.

When using the practice’s social media, all members of our practice team will not:

- Post any material that:
  - Is unlawful, threatening, defamatory, pornographic, inflammatory, menacing, or offensive
  - Infringes or breaches another person’s rights (including intellectual property rights) or privacy, or misuses the practice’s or another person’s confidential information (e.g. do not submit confidential information relating to our patients, personal information of staff, or information concerning the practice’s business operations that have not been made public)
  - Is materially damaging or could be materially damaging to the practice’s reputation or image, or another individual

- Is in breach of any of the practice's policies or procedures
- Use social media to send unsolicited commercial electronic messages, or solicit other users to buy or sell products or services or donate money
- Impersonate another person or entity (for example, by pretending to be someone else or another practice employee or other participant when you submit a contribution to social media) or by using another's registration identifier without permission
- Tamper with, hinder the operation of, or make unauthorised changes to the social media sites
- Knowingly transmit any virus or other disabling feature to or via the practice's social media account, or use in any email to a third party, or the social media site
- Attempt to do or permit another person to do any of these things:
  - Claim or imply that you are speaking on the practice's behalf, unless you are authorised to do so
  - Disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the practice, or to any third party that has disclosed information to the practice
- Be defamatory, harassing, or in violation of any other applicable law
- Include confidential or copyrighted information (e.g. music, videos, text belonging to third parties), and
- Violate any other applicable policy of the practice.

## 4. Staff responsibility

All members of our practice team must obtain the relevant approval from our social media officer prior to posting any public representation of the practice on social media websites. The practice reserves the right to remove any content at its own discretion.

Any social media must be monitored in accordance with the practice's current policies on the use of internet, email and computers.

Our practice complies with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) national law and takes reasonable steps to remove testimonials that advertise our services (which may include comments about the practitioners themselves). Our practice is not responsible for removing (or trying to have removed) unsolicited testimonials published on a website or in social media over which we do not have control.

Any social media posts by members of our practice team on their personal social media platforms should:

- Include the following disclaimer example in a reasonably prominent place if they are identifying themselves as an employee of the practice on any posting: *'The views expressed in this post are mine and do not reflect the views of the practice/business/committees/boards that I am a member of'*, and
- Respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure and other applicable laws when publishing on social media platforms.

Social media activities internally and externally of the practice must be in line with this policy.

## 5. Related Resources

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/codes-guidelines-policies/social-media-policy.aspx>