

POLICY NO 42: SOCIAL MEDIA

Key Policy Contact Person: Manager, Our Village Family Childcare

POLICY STATEMENT:

This policy aims to ensure that Our village Family Childcare Service, children, staff, and families are protected from being compromised in any form of social media. It provides guidelines for the publication of, and commentary on, social media by staff and others who can be identified as being connected with the Service.

CRITICAL INFORMATION:

- Any staff member or Educator whose actions are deemed to be in breach of this policy could face disciplinary action.
- Where the Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Head of Services will determine necessary, disciplinary action according to the circumstances of the case Counselling, mediation, training, re-training, and the issue of written warnings may be considered as possible remedies.
- In severe circumstances, failure to act in accordance with this Policy could result in termination of the Educator Agreement/Employment

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PURPOSE:

To clarify the role of the use of social media in Our Village Family Childcare Service, and to respect the rights and confidentiality of all those involved in the service.

SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:

This document applies to all Educators, Families, Coordination Unit Staff, Volunteers and Students of

Our Village Family Childcare Service.

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health is committed to improving the health of our community and being accessible to all, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with a disability, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQA+) people and other socially vulnerable groups and supporting their communities across the lifespan from birth to older age.

DEFINITIONS:

<p>Social media</p>	<p>The term used for internet-based tools for sharing and discussion amongst people.</p> <p>It refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared over open digital networks. Social media may include, although is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social networking sites i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn, Yammer • Video and photo sharing websites i.e., Flickr, YouTube • Blogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs and blogs hosted by media outlets and micro-blogging i.e., Twitter • Wikis and online collaborations i.e., Wikipedia • Forums, discussion boards and groups i.e., Google groups • Vod and podcasting • Online multi-player gaming platforms • Instant messaging including SMS. <p>Social media also includes other emerging electronic/digital communication applications. It is important to remember that any website can become a “Social media space” with the addition of functionality such as comments, likes and discussion areas.</p>
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PROCEDURES:

Benefits of social media:

Engaging in social media provides Our Village Family childcare the opportunity to directly engage with the community, inform the public about the service and what we offer and initiate consumer conversations. The purpose of the engagement of social media is to progress and to engage broadly with the community.

Social media content may include:

- Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health news items, up and coming events, service information.

- Shared resources from within the services as well as from other stakeholders.
- Light hearts information related to other programs within the community.
- Sharing updates within the Service E.G policy updates.
- Updated news, changes, and current trends in relation to Early Childhood Education and the industry
- Information from within Our Village – child photos, special events, educator updates and planning including activity.

Managing risks when participating in social media:

Educators and Staff need to be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to Our Village Family childcare and SCCH that can arise, either directly or indirectly, from their personal use of social media. Staff are personally responsible for content published in their personal capacity on any form of social media platform and have obligations around the following areas:

- Only discuss publicly available information related to Our Village or SCCH
- Be clear as to whether participating in an official or a personal capacity (as per Authority)
- Expressly state when an opinion is personal.
- Be aware that participating online may attract media interest in you as an individual.
- Be used in line with Our Village Family childcare and Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Policies and Procedures with key considerations as to content and language that is inclusive, aligns with the code of conduct.
- Be used in line with the early Childhood Education and Care national regulations and law.
- Always be respectful to and about others.
- Assume that the comments they post may be available to persons other than those for whom the communication was intended.
- Be certain not to disclose other people's personal information or publish images of others without permission. Recognise that a person may be readily identifiable even when not named.
- Re-read and re-consider what is being said before posting it.

Managing risk when participating in social media in your own time, Educators and staff must not:

- Imply authorisation to speak as a representative of Our Village or SCCH, nor give the impression that the views expressed are those of Our Village or SCCH
- Use the identity or likeness of another Our Village or SCCH Educator or staff member in a social media space.
- Use a Our Village or SCCH email address or any Our Village or SCCH logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of any personal comment.
- Post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another Our Village or SCCH Educator or staff member.
- Comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to Our Village or SCCH reputation or bring it into disrepute.

When participating in social media Educators and staff must not:

- Imply they are authorised to speak for the service nor for Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health
- Use the services' email or any logos or branding pertaining to the service when conducting personal business or expressing personal views.
- Use the identity or likeness of another employee, customer, supplier, or business partner etc.

- Publish or report on conversations or information that is deemed confidential or classified or deals with matters that are internal in nature.
- Use or disclose any information (including photography or videos) relating to children and families, other staff or anyone connected with the Service, obtained through your employment at the Service.
- Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to Sunbury and Community Health's reputation or bring the service into disrepute.
- Include posts or responses 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.

Responsibilities of Parents/Families:

- To act in accordance with this policy
- To report any inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health or the service, or content that may be in breach of this Policy, to the Manager

Identifying inappropriate use:

- Staff or Educators who notice inappropriate or unlawful content online in any way relating to the Service, or content that may be in breach of this Policy, should inform the Manager immediately.

Harassment, bullying and discrimination:

- Abusive, harassing, threatening, or defaming posting which is in breach of any of the service's Policies may result in disciplinary action being taken, even if such comments are made using private social networks outside of working hours.
- All staff and others connected with the service are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure their behaviour both online and while at the service does not constitute unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment in any form.

Breach of Policy:

- Any staff member or Educator whose actions are deemed to be in breach of this policy could face disciplinary action.
- Where the Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Head of Services will determine necessary, disciplinary action according to the circumstances of the case.
- Counselling, mediation, training, re-training, and the issue of written warnings may be considered as possible remedies.
- In severe circumstances, failure to act in accordance with this Policy could result in termination of the Educator Agreement/Employment

APPENDIX

- (SCH Legacy) External Communications Policy
- (Cobaw Legacy) social media Policy
- (SCH Legacy) Posting on the Sunbury Community health Facebook Page Work Instruction

REFERENCES:

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations, \(current version July 1, 2023\)](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia](#)

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES / WORK INSTRUCTIONS:

- Child Safe Environment & Child Protection – 7
- Interactions with children and Guiding Children’s Behaviour - 19
- Code of Conduct – 40
- Fit and Proper Assessment of FDC Educators, Assistants and Persons residing at the FDC residence – 32
- Enrolment and Orientation – 31
- Active Supervision – 52
- Governance and Management of the FDC Service Including Confidentiality of Records – 8
- Staffing – Participation of Volunteers and Students – 51
- (SCH Legacy) External Communications Policy
- (Cobaw Legacy) Social Media Policy
- (SCH Legacy) Posting on the Sunbury Community health Facebook Page Work Instruction

VERSION CONTROL AND LEGISLATION:

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