

# SESLHD POLICY COVER SHEET



**Health**  
South Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District

<b>NAME OF DOCUMENT</b>	Social Media Policy
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<b>EXECUTIVE SPONSOR or EXECUTIVE CLINICAL SPONSOR</b>	Manager Media and Communications
<b>AUTHORS</b>	Manager Media and Communications Manager Executive Service Marketing and Communications Officer
<b>POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DOCUMENT</b>	Manager Media and Communications
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	Social media, internet, intranet
<b>SUMMARY</b>	This Policy provides a Framework for the correct use of Social Media to promote and inform the community about SESLHD facilities and related services and also outlines how staff must conduct themselves when using Social Media.

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY**  
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### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The intent of this policy is to provide guidance to employees in the responsible use of social media in the context of their employment with NSW Health. The policy is underpinned by NSW Health's Core Values and the strategic direction of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD).

This policy also outlines how the Local Health District will utilise a range of social media tools to engage with the public.

Employees engaging in social media must adhere to this policy in conjunction with NSW Health's Code of Conduct and other relevant NSW Health and SESLHD policies and legislation.

Social media must not interfere with an employee's effective and efficient performance of their work responsibilities.

Possible breaches of the policy will be investigated and if proven may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with [NSW Health PD2018\\_031 Managing Misconduct](#).

### 2. AIMS

The policy sets out guidelines for employees of SESLHD on how social media will be used by the organisation; the obligations of users and the purpose of social media for SESLHD's communication with internal and external stakeholders.

### 3. BACKGROUND

Social media is a communication tool which is used by individuals as an extension of other traditional means of communication. For organisations, social media can complement existing traditional methods of promoting services and communicating with key stakeholders, such as the public. Social media was outlined in the NSW Government's 2021 Plan as a necessary tool, which all government agencies should utilise.

The growing use of social media and networking sites is providing opportunities for individuals to communicate and share information. Social media is also a powerful engagement tool for organisations to communicate with staff, external stakeholders and the community. Social media includes blogs, podcasts, video and audio sharing sites, online groups and social networking sites such as *Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, WeChat, Tinder* and *WhatsApp* to name a few. The comments an individual makes either professionally or personally could potentially be online permanently. This policy has been produced to help employees to minimise the risks of using social media.

SESLHD will use social media for the following purposes:

- Engage with members of the community and community groups
- Facilitate a communication channel for the public to access information about our services

- Facilitate a communication channel for health promotion
- Promote SESLHD events
- Facilitate a communication for public health announcements such as new programs, outbreaks
- Provide interesting and useful information for the community
- Engage distinct demographics
- Encourage feedback from the public
- Enable information sharing for clinicians.

#### 4. TARGET AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all employees of SESLHD, contractors (including Visiting Medical Officers, honorary appointments and agency staff) and all members of the public engaged in a voluntary capacity, including work experience placements.

#### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

##### A) Staff have a responsibility to:

- act in accordance with this policy, [NSW Government Social Media policy](#) and any other relevant procedures and legislation when using social media
- report any instances of the posting of inappropriate material, comment or intellectual property in accordance with the NSW Code of Conduct which requires staff to report any breach of the Code to their line manager or a more senior staff member
- carry out their duties responsibly, effectively and efficiently
- ensure they only access and use social media sites outside working hours in a private capacity, unless for the purpose of carrying out their duties
- use SESLHD computers and network connections appropriately and in line with relevant policies.

##### B) Managers are to:

- ensure that staff working within their area of management understand this policy
- investigate any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by their staff.

##### C) Online Communications Committee are to:

- approve [requests to establish social media sites](#)

#### 6. PRIVATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY STAFF

Using social media for personal purposes while at work is **not** permitted. However staff who have personal accounts should be reminded that anything they do post on their personal accounts can potentially be seen by anyone with access to social media. Staff should not post personal comments that identify or discuss their place of work. It is important that individuals know who their online friends and contacts are when using social media sites and, most importantly, understand privacy settings.

Both the Australian and New Zealand Medical Associations and the Royal College of Nursing Australia recommend that even in a personal capacity do not accept friend requests from former or existing patients as this can breach professional boundaries.

Making comments or remarks about patients that have been treated in the health service may contravene patient confidentiality. Making comments or remarks about patients that have been treated in the health service may also breach the Code of Conduct.

Comments/posts made privately should not purport to be made as a representative of SESLHD, nor should inappropriate material be loaded which may contravene any NSW Health Policy or bring NSW Health or SESLHD into disrepute. If a staff member has a personal social media account, they must not offer opinions or comments on behalf of SESLHD or its facilities, to do so would breach the Code of Conduct.

All staff should be aware that personal comments on their own Social Media pages, or in public or private groups, which could be considered inappropriate material by any member of the community can easily be duplicated and reposted without the staff member's knowledge. This can result in the staff member facing a backlash from online trolls. If the staff member has listed their place of work in their biography, complaints may come through to the District and there could be consequences for the staff member in line with the Code of Conduct.

Staff would not normally be expected to access and use social media sites during working hours in a private capacity, unless for the purpose of carrying out their duties.

Using "Facebook Live", "Periscope" or other live broadcasting services within any hospital setting is prohibited, unless prior approval has been sought through the Media and Communications Manager.

## **7. SESLHD SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

### **Public sites**

SESLHD social media sites are developed for engagement with the public. The District currently has accounts with Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

No hospitals or units/wards/services/facilities within a hospital can apply to create a public social media site. All information relating to these areas can be sent to media and communications (email link) to post on the official SESLHD pages (subject to approval).

### **Closed Groups**

Units/Wards/services/facilities can create closed/private Facebook pages for the purpose of sharing information, such as roster changes or other work related discussions, with staff. These closed groups are still required to be given approval from the Tier 2 Director and Media and Communications before proceeding.

All closed/private groups must have at least two administrators and all staff in the group are required to follow the social media guidelines set out in this policy.

Additional information is contained in the 'Use of Social Media Business Rule'. The request to establish any form of social media must be completed [online](#), outlining resourcing, activity, target audience, moderation/risk and evaluation.

### 8. RECORD KEEPING

The content of social media pages will be captured and archived on a regular basis in accordance with State Records Guideline – Records Management and Web 2.0.

### 9. DEFINITIONS

#### Inappropriate Material

For the purpose of this policy, Inappropriate Material includes, but is not limited to, any material that:

- could damage NSW Health or SESLHD reputations or good standing in the community
- is misleading or deceptive or is likely to mislead or deceive
- may lead to criminal or civil liability; or could reasonably be found to be offensive, threatening, intimidating, abusive or defamatory
- could potentially result in victimisation, harassment or bullying
- could be interpreted to discriminate against, harass or vilify colleagues, patients/clients or the public, on the grounds of sex, pregnancy, marital status, age, race, nationality, cultural or ethnic background, religious background, disability, HIV/AIDS, sexuality
- is retained and secured by the organisation, in accordance with Section 5 of the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* or the *Health Services Act 1997*.

Examples of this may include private health information, records, photos or images, tax file numbers, employee personal details.

#### Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, social media includes, but is not limited to:

- social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Yammer, LinkedIn; Tinder; Grindr
- video and photo sharing websites e.g. Instagram, YouTube; Vimeo; TicTok, Flickr
- micro blogging sites e.g. Twitter, Snapchat, WeChat, WhatsApp
- web blogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications
- forums and discussion boards e.g. Whirpool, Yahoo!, Reddit, Facebook groups or Google Groups
- podcasting –hosted through third-party platforms such as Soundcloud
- any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools.

#### Comments, Conversation, Posts or Postings

For the purpose of this policy, Comments, Conversations, Posts, Blogs or Postings, include but are not limited to any form of communication made via social media.

**10. REFERENCES**
**Internal**

[NSW Health Code of Conduct PD2015\\_049](#)

[NSW Government Social Media Policy](#)

[NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information](#)

[SESLHDPR/290 - Promoting a positive and respectful workplace – Preventing and managing workplace bullying and harassment](#)

[SESLHD Policy Authority to use SESLHD Logo SESLHDPR/227](#)

[SESLHD Use of Social Media SESLHDBR/023](#)

[SESLHD Request to Establish a Social Media Website](#)

[NSW Health PD2018\\_031 Managing Misconduct](#)

**11. REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY**

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
April 2013	0	Kate Sikora Manager Media and Communications
August 2013	1	Scarlette Acevedo, District Policy Officer
April 2015	2	Kate Sikora Manager Media and Communications
August 2017	3	Allyson Moore Marketing and Communications Officer
February 2020	4	Allyson Moore Marketing and Communications Officer
February 2020	4	Minor updates to section 6 and 7; and hyperlinks in section 10 Processed by Executive Services prior to publishing.

**Appendix 1****House Rules for SESLHD Facebook Pages**

This Facebook page is open to all and user comments and opinions are welcomed and encouraged. Users are free to post their thoughts or feedback and exchange with one another. To make sure this site is a safe place for all users, and for legal reasons, there are terms of use and some house rules users are asked to follow.

We expect that users will not post content that falls into the following categories and reserve the right to remove postings that are:

- Offensive, divisive, aggressive, abusive, defamatory or intolerant
- Fraudulent, deceptive, misleading or unlawful
- Trolling, deliberately derailing discussions or posting multiple versions of the same view to the forum
- Unrelated or off-topic
- Violates the intellectual property right of another individual or entity
- Spamming in nature
- Commercial solicitation or solicitation of donations
- Uses obscene or offensive language

The views, opinions, and information expressed in user-generated comments remain with the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District or its staff.

While user generated comments are not edited, to ensure a positive experience for visitors of this site and the broader community, the District may report or remove at its discretion any content or comments containing spam, profanity, or otherwise objectionable or prohibited material.

We encourage you to have open and honest discussions whilst being respectful of your fellow community members.

SESLHD does not give specific medical advice to individuals through Facebook. If you are concerned with your symptoms you should seek medical advice through your GP, or if you think it is an emergency, go to your local hospital.

You can also call Health Direct Australia on 1800 022 222, where a registered nurse will assess your symptoms and advise on what you should do.