



PURPOSE

This document informs staff on the ACHA position on the use of social media. It outlines the standards employees are required to observe when using social media and applies to all employees of ACHA. Its purpose is to set the parameters for the use of social media, where it forms part of employees’ professional responsibilities and to inform employees of their responsibilities, when using social media in a personal capacity.

This policy is intended to protect the confidentiality, interests, and reputation of ACHA and its services, as well as the privacy and confidentiality of employees, customers, and patients.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all ACHA facilities.

POLICY

The ACHA policy on Social Media – Employee Use is to:

- **Protect ACHA’s reputation, commercial interest and/or ensure ACHA is not brought into disrepute.**
- **Minimise the business, legal and personal risks that may arise from individuals’ use of social media, both during work time and non-work time.**
- **Protect the privacy and safety of employees and patients when using Social Media platforms.**
- **Outline the employees’ obligation to avoid conduct that may violate relevant laws, ACHA policies, or that may trigger claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or any other unfair employment practices, against ACHA.**

BACKGROUND

Social media includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, YouTube forums, message boards or comments on web articles such as Yammer, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Employees are expected to be aware of and comply with appropriate use of social media as set out in this policy. A copy of this policy shall be provided as part of orientation for new employees.

PROCEDURE

1. Using Work-Related Social Media

ACHA recognises the importance of social media in shaping public thinking about our company and our services. We also recognise the importance of our staff joining in and helping shape industry conversation and direction through social media. ACHA employees using work-related social media must:

- Remember not to publish anything about which they may feel even slightly uneasy. If in doubt, they should discuss with their General Manager or Corporate Affairs advisor first; and
- Take note that any broadcast on any social media platform may be a broadcast to the world and will not necessarily remain private.

2. Personal Use of Social Media

The content in sections 2 and 3 of this policy apply to individuals’ personal social media activities that may give the appearance that they are speaking on behalf of ACHA, or which may create significant risk for the company, its patients, clients, and customers.

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APPROVED	Paul Evans
DESIGNATION	CEO, Hospital Operations
DATE	September 2022

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ACHA recognises that employees engage in social networking during non-work time. The Rules for Social Media (as set out below) are designed to reduce the likelihood that personal social networking activities will have an adverse effect on themselves, ACHA, other employees, patients, or the organisation's reputation.

Employees should limit participation in social media activities during work time unless required by their position; incidental use occurring during break times or in a manner that is consistent with other general internet use is not prohibited by this policy. Excessive personal use of social media during work times is a breach of this policy and may result in disciplinary action. Note that protocols for authorised ACHA social media users are addressed in the Social Media- Professional Use 1.37 policy.

3. Rules for Use of Social Media

- 3.1. Employees must abide by the *ACHA Code of Conduct* (0.030).
- 3.2. Employees must not knowingly use the identity of another ACHA employee.
- 3.3. Employees must not imply in any way that they are authorised to speak on ACHA's behalf. This could potentially be implied by virtue of the position held by an employee, through their status in the organisation, their role or the specialist knowledge they are deemed to possess. Employees for whom this may be implied, making personal comment on their own social media channels, should include a disclaimer that their views 'are personal views only and do not represent the views of their employer', and otherwise comply with this policy.
- 3.4. Employees must not use ACHA logos, trademarks or proprietary graphics that would create the appearance they are speaking on behalf of ACHA.
- 3.5. Employees are responsible for any publicly viewable intentionally false statements that damage the company or the company's reputation.
- 3.6. Employees must ensure that comments or posts do not damage ACHA's reputation, commercial interest and/or bring ACHA into disrepute.
- 3.7. Some topics present significant business risk to the organisation and must not be discussed on social media, even where employees express their own opinions and provide a disclaimer. Non-exhaustive examples of topics that must not be discussed include:
 - a. Speculation about the future business performance, business plans, unannounced strategies, potential acquisitions or divestitures.
 - b. Non-public information about financial performance, changes in financial performance or liquidity.
 - c. Potential mergers and acquisitions.
 - d. Sensitive information involving competitors.
 - e. Operational matters, including staffing.
- 3.8. Individuals must not announce news about ACHA that is not already made public. Only those officially designated by ACHA are authorised to speak on behalf of the company.
 If there is any doubt as to information that may be posted on social media sites, please refer the matter to the relevant General Manager, or to the Corporate Affairs Team.
 Where a ACHA employee has been approved to present or speak at a public forum, that employee may post about the event on social media channels (i.e., LinkedIn), however, any posts should be agreed in advance with Corporate Affairs, to coordinate approach with ACHA's own social media posting.
- 3.9. Individuals must not use or disclose any identifiable patient information of any kind, including patient images, on any social media platform or smartphone application without the express written authorisation of the patient. Additionally, online activities regarding patients within ACHA that may compromise a patient's

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privacy, personal dignity or otherwise make them question the confidentiality of the services provided by the company are strictly prohibited.

- 3.10 Employees must not upload, post, forward or post links to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content, including photos and videos, or any material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights.
- 3.11 Employees must not post or send messages where the message has the intended or unintended consequence of degrading, debasing, defaming, threatening or inciting harm to staff or to patients, or which invades the privacy of any person. This includes taking unauthorised photographs or video footage of other patients or staff and transmitting these images or footage via the internet, or any social media platform.
- 3.12 Staff must not communicate on Facebook (or other social media) with clients/patients/consumers at any time, even for personal use, as this constitutes a breach of health care professional boundaries.
- 3.13 Staff must be polite, and respectful of others' opinions at all times.

Remember: Individuals are more likely to resolve complaints about work by speaking directly with co-workers, supervisors, or managers rather than by posting complaints on social media.

4. Breach of Policy

Breach of this policy may also constitute breach of other applicable ACHA policies and procedures.

Employees who do not comply with this policy may face disciplinary action under ACHA disciplinary policy and procedures. This disciplinary action may involve a verbal or written warning or, in serious cases, termination of employment or engagement with ACHA, including summary dismissal.

If employees break the law, they may also be personally liable and ACHA will make notification to the police as required. Notification will also be made to AHPRA and other relevant professional authorities where there is a breach of professional duties.

Specifically, employees' misuse of social media, smartphones, mobile phones, computers, cameras etc. will result in disciplinary action which may include termination of employment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff are responsible for ensuring they familiarise themselves with this policy and any related attachments, which in effect, form part of this policy.

The General Manager carries overall responsibility for management of this Policy and any related attachments. The General Manager and the Directors of Nursing will ensure that the policy is compliant with all legislative requirements, and is responsible for ensuring the policy is reviewed and updated in line with the timeframes determined by the ACHA Executive, via the Executive Committee.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- ACHA Policy 0.030 Code of Conduct - ACHA
- ACHA Policy 0.21 Privacy
- ACHA Policy 1.17 Media and Public Relations
- ACHA Policy 1.37 Social Media – Professional Use
- ACHA Policy 2.16 Rights and Responsibilities, Patient's
- ACHA Policy 4.05 Performance and Conduct Management

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- ACHA Policy 4.46 Bullying Prevention

REGULATORY REFERENCES

Author: General Manager - Human Resources

REVIEW / CONSULTATION

Chief Medical Officer	All General Managers	All Directors of Nursing
All Quality Managers	Legal Counsel	All State Managers
People and Culture EGM	Policy Consultation Group	

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