

Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is intended to help staff and volunteers make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace and blogs.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels including trustees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff. It is expected that the policy is complied with at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of our organisations, services, service users, employees and partners.

This policy outlines expectations of the standards we require of all users above when using social media, the circumstances in which we will monitor use of social media and the action we will take in respect of breaches of this policy.

The Policy is designed to protect the organisation and its employees and volunteers, rather than to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information.

Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS, recognises that employees and volunteers have a right to express opinions. However, we would like to make it clear that bullying or offensive comments and those that breaches equality policies made to other employees, volunteers or business contacts – whether inside or outside work, and whether in person or via social media will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

Remember: All users are personally responsible for the content published on the internet and social networking sites, whether through business or personal use. Information disseminated through the internet and social networking and/or social media sites is subject to all CBC Policies.

Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or may otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and/or our organisation.

Be aware that once you publish something via any form of social media it is out there for all to see and you cannot take it back and it will be public for years.

If in doubt don't publish it.

The Policy should be read in conjunction with our Policies including the Equality and Diversity Policy and The Data Protection Act.

Where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken.

2. Procedures and Expectations For Using Work-Related Social Media (but not limited to)

We recognise the importance of the internet and the opportunities this may have in shaping information about our organisation, services, employees, volunteers and partners. We also recognise the importance of staff joining in and supporting this through interaction in social media. However, before using work-related social media, you must at the very least follow the procedures and guidance below:

Posting comments/info on social media sites for work should only be done by those people who have been given this as part of their job role or been requested to do so by their line manager.

- You need to ensure that there are appropriate privacy controls on your Facebook page and other social media sites so we don't inadvertently get the organisation into trouble. If unsure seek advice.
- You must not upload, post, forward or post a link to any illegal, abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- Never disclose commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information.
- Never make any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or us)
- Do not use material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.
- Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset, return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner.
- Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS . If you make a mistake in a contribution, be prompt in admitting and correcting it and report this to the SENDIASS manager as soon as possible.
- Any member of staff who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should report this to the SENDIASS manager.
- If you notice any content posted on social media about us (whether complementary or critical) please report to the SENDIASS manager

3. Expectations for Personal Use of Social Media Sites

Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS wishes to strike a balance between allowing employees to express their views, but also in making clear that we do not condone the misuse of social media at any time.

We request that when using social media for personal use you follow the guidance and requests below:

Personal use of social media sites must be done in your own time and not in work time. CBC do allow employees personal use of emails and the internet during lunch hours. However, unacceptable websites such as those with but not limited to adult, offensive, illegal or gambling content must not be visited on work computers regardless of the hour.

- You should use your personal email address and not your work address.
- Don't forget to set appropriate privacy controls on your Facebook page and other social media sites so they don't inadvertently get you into trouble.
- You should not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or may otherwise give rise to legal liability against you.
- It is always recommended that if you are angry or upset then give yourself time to consider your response – once it is out there it cannot be taken back.
- We would request that you remove any reference to where you work on private social media platforms.
- Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS reminds employees and volunteers of the importance of not bringing the service into disrepute on social media sites. A breach of this may lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Bullying, harassment, offensive, discriminatory, derogatory or defamatory comments made to, or about other employees or business contacts – whether inside or outside work, and whether in person or via social media – will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.
- Any member of staff who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should report this to the SENDIASS manager.
- We request, that If you notice any content posted on social media about Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS, (whether complementary or critical) please alert the SENDIASS manager.

Remember If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, or on a site you are unsure of, then you should consider whether you should do it.

Monitoring & Review

Any use of social media websites during work time (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored as necessary, where justifiable and proportionate, for business purposes or where personal use is excessive. Employees should not assume that emails sent or received are purely private.

Where evidence of misuse is found we may undertake an investigation. If necessary, such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

We will review the policy annually, to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

Finally, we suggest, that if you ever feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then you shouldn't do it.

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