

CESC social media guidelines

Introduction

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (the Office) will participate on social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to engage with existing and new stakeholders and communities online.

Maintaining a presence and actively engaging with audiences on social media services is an increasingly important part of the Office's communication strategy.

Who it applies to

These guidelines set out recommended practices for:

- staff who operate the Office's official social media accounts
- staff who associate with the Office on their personal social media accounts.

For this purpose, staff includes casual, fixed term, employees on probation, part-time employees, managers, acting staff, employees working from home, contractors, employees on a secondment, as well as full time and ongoing employees.

Purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines will assist staff in engaging positively online and will outline the responsible behaviour expected of staff who are actively involved in operating the Office's social media channels, or referring to it in their personal use.

What is social media?

Social media platforms allow users to share and upload user-generated content such as photos, videos and opinions for discussion over open digital networks. Social media has transformed the way society communicates, and offers unique opportunities to engage with stakeholders and communities online.

Social media may include, but is not limited to social networking sites (Facebook, Google+), professional networking sites (LinkedIn), photo and video sharing sites (Instagram, YouTube, Flickr), blogs, micro-blogging sites (Twitter, Tumblr), forums (Whirlpool, Reddit), wikis (Wikipedia), vod and podcasting, email and instant messaging.

Social media may also include all other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

Official use of social media

The Office will participate on social media in the following ways:

- by contributing original content on its social media platforms, discussion forums or other time-specific initiatives
- by engaging with other users in a way that adds genuine value or addresses a question
- by sharing or re-tweeting content produced by external organisations including news outlets, influentials, NGOs or government organisations.

Use of personal accounts associated with the Office

Staff may establish social media accounts that use their own identity and associate directly with the Office. Staff who choose to do this should:

- notify the Senior Communications Advisor before they set up an account
- provide a disclaimer in their description to the effect: *these views are my own and not of the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner. For all official views please see: @eSafetyOffice*
- not promote or share content that is in direct opposition to the Office's position on a topic
- not post inappropriate content, for example offensive or inflammatory posts, photos or videos
- not post sensitive or private information about the Office, not for public disclosure
- engage positively online and treat others with respect
- adhere to the APS guidelines on public comment, referred to at the end of this document.

Principles of engagement

The following principles of engagement should be adopted by staff operating the Office's social media accounts:

- **Authoritative**—position the Office as a source of truth. Seek to clarify incorrect information about the Office posted on social media.
- **Supportive**—provide useful, relevant information for parents, educators and children dealing with online safety issues.
- **Responsive**—aim to respond to all social media queries within 48 hours and participate in conversations relevant to the Office. Engaging in conversations as they occur is an effective way to get messages out and build relationships.
- **Authentic**—humanise posts to connect with audiences. For staff operating official social media accounts, this may include signing off with your name.
- **Engage positively**—provide useful content that genuinely helps and encourages positive behaviour, rather than 'pointing the finger' only.
- **Responsible**—exercise good judgment & common sense when posting content on social media. Take responsibility for what you write.
- **Respect**—treat all users on social media with respect and respect the privacy of confidential information and colleagues.

Moderation and comments

The Office welcomes constructive, respectful engagement and promotes open, "family friendly" forums. We moderate all of our social media and feedback sites and request users observe the following posting guidelines:

- Defamatory, offensive or unlawful posts will not be published or will be removed.
- Forms of solicitation or advertising will not be published or will be removed.
- Posts that contain a link to, or copy of, content that is subject to an online content complaint, or cyberbullying complaint, will be removed or not published in the interest of protecting others from inadvertently accessing material that may be prohibited.
- Comments should be on topic and relevant to the Office.

Comments published on the Office's social media sites or blog are the views of the commenter. Publication of the comments should not be taken as endorsement or agreement by the Office. Retweets (via Twitter) should also not be seen as endorsements or agreement by the Office.

The Office makes no warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, reliability, validity and/or completeness of third-party information.

Implementation, monitoring and review

The Office's Senior Communications Advisor is largely responsible for the implementation, monitoring and review of all of the Office's official social media accounts and content.

A core group of staff actively monitor and contribute content to the Office's social media accounts. This group consists of subject matter experts from across the Office and meet on a regular basis to discuss topical issues. All sensitive content is reviewed by the Senior Communications Advisor before it is published.

Each social media channel is monitored during working hours and outside working hours when necessary. A third-party application will be used to monitor and report on social media activity.

A social media plan will be implemented for each social media platform where the Office is present. The plan will be reviewed annually from the date of its endorsement, unless review is required earlier by senior management.

Social media platforms are reviewed and modified continuously to keep them in line with the overall objectives of the Office and needs of the public.

Advertising on social media

Advertising on official social media accounts is an effective and cost-efficient way to target specific audiences with specific messages and calls to action.

Any advertising on social media should be run through a central account, with approval from the Senior Communications Advisor, Programs Manager and Business Manager beforehand.

Large social media advertising campaigns with a budget of \$2,000 or more will need to be run through our advertising agency Dentsu Mitchell.

Advertising should only be conducted on the Office's official social media accounts—not personal accounts associated with the Office.

Public information and confidentiality

Only information that is publicly available about the Office will be posted to an official Office social media account or personal account associated with the Office. This includes information on its website or in its annual report, or information that senior management has authorised for release.

All information provided on official Office social media accounts or personal accounts associated with the Office will be factually correct.

Confidential information will not be posted on official Office social media accounts or personal accounts associated with the Office.

Copyright

Copyright and fair use of information will be adhered to on both official social media accounts and personal accounts associated with the Office.

The government has agreed for works covered by Crown copyright to be automatically licensed under the appropriate open attribution licence. The actual licence is an agency decision.

When using social media, it is acceptable to link to another person's work. In general, a short excerpt—typically no more than a paragraph—can be quoted. The author and publisher should be acknowledged.

If another person's intellectual property is not in the public arena and the Office plans to post it, the author's permission will be obtained beforehand.

Only copyright-free images will be used in compliance with the rights holder's requirements.

Guidelines for APS employees

The Australian Public Service Commission has updated its [guidance on public comment](#), including individual comment on current affairs through blogs, social networking sites and other online media that allow user participation and interaction.

Staff should be aware of the APS requirements when engaging on social media in an official or personal capacity, including:

- behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- delivering services fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously to the Australian public
- being sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public
- taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest
- making proper use of Commonwealth resources
- upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS
- not acting in a way that would call into question the APS employee's ability to be apolitical, impartial and professional in the performance of their duties.