

Warragul Family Medicine Social Media Policy



Purpose

This policy provides guidance when using social media internally and externally. The policy helps identify and mitigate potential risks associated with social media usage.

Definition

'Social media' is online social networks used to disseminate information through online interaction.

Background and rationale

Regardless of whether social media is used for business related activity or for personal reasons, the following standards apply to all GPs and practice staff of the practice. GPs and practice staff are legally responsible for their postings online. GPs and staff may be subject to liability and disciplinary action including termination of employment if their posts are found to be in breach of this policy.

When using the practice's social media, practice staff will not:

1) Post any material that:

- Is unlawful, threatening, defamatory, pornographic, inflammatory, menacing, or offensive.
- Infringes or breaches another person's rights (including intellectual property rights) or privacy, or misuses the practices or another person's confidential information (eg do not submit confidential information relating to our patients, personal information of staff, or information concerning the practice's business operations that have not been made public)
- Is materially damaging or could be materially damaging to the practice's reputation or image, or another individual
- Is in breach of any of the practice's policies or procedures.

2) Use social media to send unsolicited commercial electronic messages or solicit other users to buy or sell products or services or donate money

3) Impersonate another person or entity (for example, by pretending to be someone else or another practice employee or other participant when you submit a contribution to social media) or by using another's registration identifier without permission.

4) Tamper with, hinder the operation of, or make unauthorised changes to the social media sites.

5) Knowingly transmit any virus or other disabling feature to or via the practice's social media account, or use in any email to a third party or the social media site

6) Attempt to do or permit another person to do any of these things:

- Claim or imply that you are speaking on the practice's behalf, unless you are authorised to do so
- Disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the practice or to any third party that has disclosed information to the practice.

7) Be defamatory, harassing or in violation of any other applicable law.

8) Include confidential or copyrighted information (eg music, videos, text belonging to third parties)

9) Violate any other applicable policy of the practice.

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Privacy and security

All practice staff must obtain the relevant approval from the social media responsible officer (Practice Manager) prior to posting any public representation of the practice on social media websites. The practice reserves the right to remove any content at its own discretion.

Monitoring social media sites

Any social media must be monitored in accordance with the practice's current policies on the use of internet, email and computers.

Staff responsibility

The practice will appoint a staff member as social media responsible officer (Practice Manager) to manage and monitor the practice's social media accounts. All posts on the practice's social media website must be approved by this staff member.

The practice complies with AHPRA national law and takes reasonable steps to remove testimonials that advertise their health services (which may include comments about the practitioners themselves). The practice is not responsible for removing (or trying to have removed) unsolicited testimonials published on a website or in social media over which they do not have control.

Any social media posts by staff on their personal social media platforms should:

- Include the following disclaimer example in a reasonably prominent place if you identify yourself as a practice employee on any posting: "The views expressed in this post are mine and do not reflect the views of the practice/business/committees/boards that I am a member of".
- Respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure and other applicable laws when publishing on social media platforms.

Breach of policy

Social media activities internally and externally of the practice must be in line with this policy.

Breaching this social media policy includes posting offensive, defamatory, or unlawful content; breaching patient confidentiality or sharing private practice information. Such violations can lead to disciplinary action, including employment termination, legal consequences, or professional misconduct complaints. The exact outcome depends on the severity, intent, and whether patient privacy or the practice's reputation was affected