



Written By

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Introduction

The use of social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other forms of social media has increased significantly in recent years.

Approved Providers generally accept that staff will use social media in their personal lives to keep in touch with friends, share ideas and information with families and engage in online discussions. However, they also recognise the potential for damage that the misuse of social media can cause to their business, staff members, children and families. Such damage can be occasioned when the comments are untoward and the staff members can be identified within the service.

All staff need to be aware that they are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any social media platform. They also need to accept that any comments they post are usually available to a far wider audience than intended, and may be permanent.

Aim

Bermagui Preschool aims to ensure that the preschool, children, staff and families are protected from being compromised in any form of social media. This policy provides guidelines for the publication of, and commentary on, social media by staff and others who can be identified as being connected with the preschool.

Strategies

When participating in social media, Bermagui Preschool staff should:

- Refer and abide by Bermagui Preschool's Confidentiality Policy;
- Be respectful to and about others at all times;
- Assume that the comments that they post may be available to persons other than those for whom the communication was intended;
- Be certain not to disclose other people's personal information or publish images of others without permission;
- Recognise that a person may be readily identifiable even when not named; and
- Re-read and reconsider what is being said before posting it.
- Staff should not accept children and parents as friends due to it being a breach of expected professional conduct unless they already know them in a personal capacity before their child starts at Preschool. Staff should avoid personal communication, including on social networking sites, with the children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity.

When participating in social media, staff must not:

- Imply they are authorised to speak for the preschool nor for the Approved Provider unless they have permission or instruction to do so;
- Use the preschool's email or any logos or branding pertaining to the preschool when conducting personal business or expressing personal views;
- Use the identity or likeness of another employee, customer, supplier or business partner, etc;
- Publish or report on conversations or information that is deemed confidential or classified or deals with matters that are internal in nature;
- Use or disclose any information (including photographs or videos) relating to children and families, other staff or anyone connected with the preschool, obtained through their employment at the preschool;
- Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to a staff or committee member's reputation or bring the preschool into disrepute. This includes any comments that are defamatory, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, insulting, obscene or in any other way harmful.

Harassment, bullying and discrimination

Abusive, harassing, threatening or defaming postings which are in breach of any of the preschool's policies may result in disciplinary action being taken, even if such comments are made using private social media networks outside of working hours. All staff and others connected with the preschool are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and ensure their behaviour both online and while at the preschool does not constitute unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment in any form.

Access to social media at preschool

The preschool's computers and other communication devices are for work purposes only, and not for conducting personal business or for participating on social media websites during working hours or otherwise. Staff are not to use their personal mobiles, computers or other electronic devices to access social media in any form during rostered work hours except during lunch breaks.

Photographs

- Staff are not to use their personal cameras, mobile phones or other electronic devices to take photographs while at the preschool or on excursion. The requirements of this policy are to be met at all times with regard to this usage.
- No photographs taken at preschool can be used on social media without permission and consultation from the families and Nominated Supervisor.
- Older children should be asked by staff for consent before taking or using the child's photos.
- Photographs can only be used for the purpose of authorised preschool documentation. At the end of each year, all photos should be backed up onto the shared drive at preschool.
- Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children.

Strategies**Identifying inappropriate use:**

- Staff who notice inappropriate or unlawful content online in any way relating to the preschool, or content that may be in breach of this policy, should inform the Nominated Supervisor immediately.
- Any staff member whose actions are deemed to be in breach of this policy could face disciplinary action.
- Where necessary, disciplinary action will be determined by the Approved Provider according to the circumstances of the case. Counselling, mediation, retraining and the issue of written warnings may be considered by the Approved Provider as possible remedies. In severe circumstances, failure to act in accordance to this policy could result in termination of employment.

Resources & References

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/help/contact-us/social-media-policy>

Relevant Documentation

Links to other policies

- Child protection
- Staff Employment
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Confidentiality
- Publicity and Media

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