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## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### Introduction

Within the allied health sector, social media is increasingly used as a means of communication with clients, stakeholders and the general community. Social media posts can be easily disseminated but can be difficult to remove and posts that are made privately can be shared publicly without the consent of the author. Red Hen Speech Pathology is committed to acting with integrity and maintaining the safety and dignity of clients, staff and stakeholders at all times.

### Definitions

**'Social media'** describes the online and mobile tools that people use to share opinions, information, experiences, images, video or audio clips. Social media may include, but is not limited to:

- social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn
- content sharing websites such as YouTube, Snapchat, Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest
- discussion forums and message boards such as speech bubble, Google groups or Whirlpool
- blogs (personal, professional and those published anonymously), WOMO, True Local and microblogs such as Twitter and Tumblr
- corporate networking tools such as SharePoint or Enterprise Jungle
- media sites hosting articles with comments such as news hub
- wikis such as Wikipedia

**'Staff'** refers to the Director, any employees, students, volunteers or contractors of Red Hen Speech Pathology.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff and outlines their responsibilities when using social media.

### Policy Statement

When using social media, Red Hen Speech Pathology staff will at all times act in accordance with national laws, uphold the SPA Code of Ethics and Professional Standards. They will at all times maintain client confidentiality and the professional reputation of Red Hen Speech Pathology.

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## Procedures

### Official Use of Social Media

Red Hen Speech Pathology has an official Website and Facebook Page. When contributing to or managing a corporate social media account, staff are expected to act professionally and responsibly to protect the reputation of Red Hen Speech Pathology and the confidentiality of our clients at all times.

Staff should:

- Seek permission from the Director before posting anything on corporate social media accounts.
- Be respectful, polite and patient, when engaging in conversations on our company's behalf. Staff should be extra careful when making declarations or promises towards customers and stakeholders.
- Maintain client confidentiality at all times (such as by not discussing clients or posting pictures of procedures, case studies, clients, or sensitive material which may enable clients to be identified).
- Present information in an unbiased, evidence-based manner.
- Avoid speaking on matters outside their field of expertise.
- Follow our confidentiality policy and observe laws on copyright, trademarks, plagiarism and fair use.
- Avoid deleting or ignoring comments for no reason. The Director is to be advised of any criticism on social media platforms so that the Director can respond accordingly.
- Never post discriminatory, offensive or libelous content and commentary.
- Not make unsubstantiated claims.
- Correct or remove any misleading or false content as quickly as possible.
- Not set up any social media account on behalf of Red Hen Speech Pathology without consent of the Director.
- Avoid endorsing products, services or other businesses either directly or indirectly.
- Avoid real or perceived conflict of interest.

### Using Social Media Tools at Work

The staff member is required to use ICT facilities in an acceptable manner that does not interfere with the performance of their work. When participating in a social media platform or networking tool at work, staff must observe the following:

- Staff must not use ICT that belongs to or provided by Red Hen Speech Pathology to access, view or use social media unless for the purpose of official communications as permitted by the Director.
- Staff must not access, view or use personal social media during client appointments or client attributable time.
- Staff must not use RHSP ICT resources to conduct romantic relationships whether consensual or not.

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## Personal Use of Social Media

Staff should be aware that content published online and on social media is, or may become publicly available, even from personal social media accounts. While acting as private citizens, staff need to be mindful that their online behaviour must be lawful, and they may still be bound by the SPA Code of Ethics and Red Hen Speech Pathology policies. When using social media, staff must:

- Not use a work email address to establish a social media account.
- Behave in a way that upholds the integrity and good reputation of Red Hen Speech Pathology and the profession.
- Maintain client confidentiality at all times (such as by not discussing clients or posting pictures of procedures, case studies, clients, or sensitive material which may enable clients to be identified)
- Ensure others know that your personal account or statements do not represent Red Hen Speech Pathology. Staff shouldn't state or imply that their personal opinions and content are authorised or endorsed by Red Hen Speech Pathology.
- Be aware of their association with the practice, particularly if they identify as one of its staff such as listing employment in their profile.
- Remember that where they are identified or could reasonably be identified as an employee of the practice, be polite and respectful of the opinions of others at all times, and must not disparage the practice's employees, clients or other stakeholders.
- Be mindful that if they comment on the practice, ensure that the information they provide is informed and factually accurate.
- Not use social media to publicly complain about their employment.
- Not use social media to make any disparaging comments about other medical or allied health practitioners or practices.
- Avoid sharing intellectual property on personal accounts.
- Not make comments that are unlawful, obscene, defamatory, offensive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, hateful or derogatory to or about work, colleagues, clients, peers or Speech Pathology Australia.

When considering making personal comments, staff should reflect on the following questions:

- Could your comments cause Red Hen Speech Pathology clients or other stakeholders to lose confidence in your ability to work in an impartial and professional manner?
- Are your comments consistent with how the community expects an allied health practitioner to communicate and behave?
- Could your comments lower or undermine the reputation of Red Hen Speech Pathology or the Speech Pathology profession more broadly?
- Are your comments lawful? For example, do they comply with anti-discrimination legislation and laws relating to defamation?
- Would you be comfortable if your manager read your comments?
- What if someone takes a screenshot of your comments and then circulates these around?

## Disciplinary Consequences

All social media postings on RHSP corporate accounts will be monitored.

Complaints made in relation to postings on personal social media accounts will also be investigated.

The Director may take disciplinary action leading up to and including termination if staff do not follow this policy's guidelines. Examples of non-conformity with the employee social media policy include but are not limited to:

- Disregarding job responsibilities and deadlines to use social media at work.
- Disclosing confidential information through personal or corporate accounts.
- Directing offensive comments towards other members of the online community.

## **Related policy and procedures**

RHSP Child Safe Environment Policy

RHSP Confidentiality Policy

## **Related legislation, regulations and standards**

Code of Ethics (Speech Pathology Australia, 2020)

Professional Standards for Speech Pathologists in Australia (Speech Pathology Australia, 2020)

## **Approvals**

Date of approval: [14/07/2023]

Date reviewed: 15/6/2025]

Director: Manda Dalton