

9.1 Electric Communications and Social Media Policy

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Drafted by:	ML, BV	Endorsed by Board:	16/6/2020
Responsible person:	EO	Scheduled review date:	June 2021

PURPOSE

This policy aims to ensure that Interchange IE's engagement in all forms of electronic communication is of a high standard that serves the interests and reputation of Interchange IE, and our participants, families, staff and volunteers.

Interchange IE seeks to encourage information sharing amongst its membership, staff and volunteers, and seeks to utilise the expertise of its employees and volunteers in generating appropriate social media content, whilst complying with the highest standards of professional online conduct.

At the same time, social media posts should be in keeping with the image that Interchange IE wishes to represent to the public, and posts made through its social media channels should not damage the organisation's reputation in any way and must align to online protocols, such as consent for use of images or other material.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers of Interchange IE, including contractors and other interested parties.

DEFINITIONS:

Electronic communications

Electronic Communications, for the purpose of this policy, refers to the written word, or images sent via internet-based tools such as email or any other electronic means e.g. Microsoft Teams. This includes communications both internal and external to Interchange IE.

Social media

Social media is the term used for internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among people. It refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared over digital networks.

Social media may include (although is not limited to):

- social networking sites (for example Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn)
- video and photo sharing websites (for example Instagram, Tik Tok, Flickr, YouTube)
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- blogs hosted by media outlets (for example 'comments' or 'your say' feature on theage.com.au)
- micro-blogging (for example Twitter)

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- wikis and online collaborations (for example Wikipedia)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (for example Google groups, webinars, Zoom)
- vod and podcasting
- online multiplayer gaming platforms (for example World of Warcraft, Second life)
- instant messaging (including SMS, Snapchat)
- geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare)
- any
- Social media also includes all other emerging electronic/digital communication applications

POLICY

Interchange IE's use of social media shall be consistent with the following core values:

- **Integrity:** Interchange IE is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and to protecting the organisations reputation and will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about its own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals.
- **Professionalism:** Interchange IE's electronic communication and social media reflects the organisation as a whole and Interchange IE seeks to maintain a professional and consistent tone. Staff and volunteers may, from time to time and as appropriate, post on behalf of Interchange IE using its online profiles, but the impression should remain one of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals.
- **Information Sharing:** Interchange IE is committed to the sharing of online information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to its members.

In accordance with Interchange IE's Staff Code of Conduct, Privacy Policy and Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure, the following restrictions apply to electronic communications and social media-

1. Consent to use must be obtained in *'all instances where photographs, film footage, audio material, electronic images, correspondence and/or quotations are used in material using Interchange IE's name and/or logo' (- Interchange IE 'Consent to Use' Photo and publicity form).*

2. Use of electronic communications

Staff and volunteers should not communicate electronically directly to participants unless directed to do so on the Participant's Support Plan.

Where a carer/parent is not included in the communication, staff should:

- *Ensure such communication ONLY promotes authorised 'social' activity and participant contact*
- *Not request a participant keeps a communication a secret from their parents/carers or guardian*
- *Not communicate with participants using unauthorized Internet forums such as chat rooms, dating or gambling sites*

3. Monitoring of electronic communication

All staff and volunteers are required to ensure appropriate use of the internet when browsing websites at work, using

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Interchange IE devices (laptops, computers, mobile phones, tablets) confining activities to work related searches and that usage is in line with acceptable professional standards of behavior. See Code of Conduct.

When using their own electronic devices during work time staff or volunteers are required to comply with acceptable professional standards of behavior. See Code of Conduct.

In accordance with the normal principles of duty of care, staff are required to respond to situations where they observe that a participants' use of an electronic device places them or others at risk of harm, such as exposure to:

- *explicit sexual or violent material*
- *abuse or exploitation via social networking*
- *exploitation/risk via gambling sites*
- *the taking or exchanging of non-consensual photos*
- *risk of exchanging explicit or damaging material*
- *Apparent attempts from an external party which would constitute grooming for illegal or illicit purposes*

However, the primary responsibility for developing rules around the use of personal electronic devices lies with the parent/guardian of the Interchange IE participant. Interchange IE supports the right of staff to refrain from participation or involvement in preferred electronic activities requested by participants or their families on ethical or cultural grounds or if the expectation is that staff will participate in an external electronic platform which places unrealistic and unacceptable demands on a staff member or volunteer (time allocation and right to privacy).

4. Maintain and respect confidentiality (Extract from Interchange IE Staff Code of Conduct)

As an Interchange IE member of staff or volunteer, you have a responsibility to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants and families with whom you work. You should not discuss confidential information relating to the participants, families or other staff members, with the exception of seeking professional advice from Interchange IE management. Nor should you engage in discussions of a private nature in front of participants, volunteers, staff, other parents or members of the general public. A breach of participant confidentiality may be considered as serious misconduct.

Privacy breaches can occur in the home, workplace or community. Staff and volunteers must be vigilant in ensuring that sensitive information gained whilst employed by Interchange IE and at the cessation of their employment remains private and confidential across time and situations.

PROCEDURE

1. Approved Participation on authorised email and social media accounts

Before representing Interchange IE on any electronic or social media, the staff member must be authorised to do so.

All authorised social media accounts, user names, passwords, connections, and posts made on behalf of Interchange IE belong to the organisation.

Staff are not to disclose the Username and/or Password without authorisation.

2. On-line responsibilities and behaviour

When participating in electronic communication and social media staff and or volunteers must:

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- Act for the sole purpose of benefitting Interchange IE
- Disclose their role with Interchange IE
- Comply with Interchange IE's Code of Conduct and all other organisational policies
- Not make disparaging or negative comments about Interchange IE, the management, staff or volunteers, participants and families, funding bodies, or sponsors
- Adhere to professional conduct and boundaries as outlined in the Code of Conduct and Interchange IE's Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure
- Not post material that threatens; is obscene; sexually explicit; sexually harassing; defamatory; harassing; discriminatory; or hateful to another person or entity
- Not make posts that could be deemed to be illegal
- Not make posts or statements which are misleading or deceptive
- Not store or upload photos of Interchange IE participants on personal devices or social networking sites

3. Confidential information

Authorised Interchange IE Users must:

- Ensure they are not first to make any announcements on behalf of Interchange IE unless they are specifically authorised to do so
- Not comment on topics that are not within their area of responsibility
- Ensure that any posts are in accordance with the Interchange IE position on a particular issue
- Abide by Interchange IE's Privacy Policy and keep confidential information confidential

Interchange IE Executive is the only authorised person to respond to media or reputational challenges about Interchange IE or its activities. Enquiries responding to a critical incident which is receiving media attention will be directed to a single source of authorised communication on the Interchange IE website, with updates regularly provided. Staff must comply with directing all enquiries to this source.

4. Intellectual property

Staff using authorised accounts must ensure they do not breach any laws by using:

1. Interchange IE's names, logos and trademarks or other such intellectual property without permission
2. Materials that are subject to Copyright and passing them off as their own original work

5. Notice of surveillance

All staff and volunteers will be subject to surveillance in the knowledge that:

Internet communications are not private and that Interchange IE or its IT agent may monitor internet usage and browsing history.

Participation in social networking sites may be monitored, even if the networking group is closed to general access.

6. Breach of procedure

Failure to comply with this Policy/Procedure may result in disciplinary action or, if the breach is deemed serious enough, dismissal may occur, or if deemed to be unlawful, the incident will be reported to Police.

Breaches of procedure which may lead to disciplinary action and/or dismissal

1. Use of social media sites during working hours- staff may not access their personal social media accounts during working hours, unless they are using personal devices and it is during their break.
2. Sending material or making any post that is deemed to be illegal

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3. Disclosure of Interchange IE's confidential information
4. Making postings that amount to sexual harassment, bullying or racial vilification
5. Posting obscene, vulgar or pornographic content
6. Posting information that may cause damage to Interchange IE or any of its associates including staff, volunteers and participants
7. Posting material that breaches the staff member's obligations of good faith to Interchange IE, our participants, volunteers, sponsors and supporters
8. Friending participants and their families without disclosure of a professional conflict of interest

References /Related Documents

Interchange IE Staff Code of Conduct

Privacy Policy

Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure