

▲ SOCIAL MEDIA

▲ NQS

Element 2.2: Each child is protected

Element 4.2 Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical

Element 4.2.1 Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships

Element 5.1.2 The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times

Element 7.1.2 Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Element 7.2 Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community

Early Childhood and Care Services National Regulations 168

PURPOSE

To ensure FROEBEL, children, parents, and employees are protected and not compromised on any form of social networking or related websites.

▲ POLICY

The policy applies to all employees, students, volunteers, and contractors working within or for FROEBEL.

Social networking and social media are powerful communication tools which can have a significant impact on professional and organisational reputations. It is important that employees ensure proper practice when using these tools.

FROEBEL policy states that staff members are permitted to use any social networking site, as long as they adhere to the following guidelines. Failure to comply with these procedures may be an invasion of privacy and may infringe Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics and Privacy Professional Boundaries and Confidentiality policies.

FROEBEL has therefore developed procedures to help clarify how best to use social media.

FROEBEL Australia is committed to:

- maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of children and families attending the service.

- Ensuring the online safety of children, families and employees who attend the service.

PROCEDURES

Definition of social media

Definitions of social media include:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram LinkedIn, Myspace);
- Video and photo sharing web sites (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, YouTube);
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- Micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter) and
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool).
- Social media also includes all other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

Duty of Care and Ethical Obligations

If you are working with children, you have a duty of care for their wellbeing and need to be aware of your legal and ethical obligations before posting any personal details, their name, photos, video and work. To protect the interests of children, personal or private information must not be included on any publicly available webpage. When written permission is received and child protection obligations are met photos, videos and news may be shared with the approval of the Managing Director or the authorised person.

Prior to sharing content, staff and families must consider privacy, confidentiality and sensitive content. If there are likely to be any privacy or confidentiality issues or if content is of a sensitive nature careful thought must be given as to whether it should be posted at all. If you are unable to make this decision you should seek advice and help from your leader, manager or from units like Legislation and Legal Services or Online Communications Services.

Personal use of social media

Social networking on the company computers must not be used for any commercial or excessive personal use. Accessing the internet and social media sites such as Facebook, for personal use is prohibited during work hours for primary contact staff working with children and only permitted for all other staff for non-excessive and/or Permitted Use (Refer to Computer and IT Policy).

Staff should be aware that content published on social media sites is publicly available, even if only shared on their personal social media account. Employees of FROEBEL can be held accountable for their actions outside of business hours.

As such, FROEBEL employees must ensure:

- They are mindful that their behaviour is bound by the ethical obligations as described above and within the Code of Ethics Policy, even when outside their work hours;
- Not to make comments that are offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to or about FROEBEL, the work, another employee or about another person or entity.
- That comments are not or could not be perceived to be:
 - made on behalf of FROEBEL, rather than an expression of a personal view;
 - so harsh or extreme in the criticism of FROEBEL that they raise questions about capacity to work professionally, efficiently or impartially as a FROEBEL employee (such comments would not have to relate to the employee's area of work) or could seriously disrupt the workplace (employees are encouraged to resolve concerns by using internal dispute resolution mechanisms);
 - a gratuitous personal attack connected with the employment;
 - criticism of FROEBEL Early Learning Centre's children, families, service or workshops;
 - compromising public confidence in FROEBEL.
- Where staff participate in a discussion not directly related to their work but that draws on their expertise in a field, such as child development, teaching or education, this would be considered personal use. However, staff should not reveal information about FROEBEL that is not publicly available.
- It may not be appropriate to make connections with everyone who follows your posts eg, 'befriending', 'liking', subscribing or 'following'. Reflecting on

FROEBEL's 'Professional Boundaries Policy', and keeping in mind these guidelines:

- develop your own ethical guidelines to help you make decisions about who you might 'follow/friend/like' or subscribe to;
- do not 'friend' children or their parents on Facebook, not even with a 'teacher' presence. You can 'like' a page or participate in a group together but do not click 'Add as friend'
- If you were 'friends' with children or their parents before you became staff of FROEBEL, you do not necessarily have to delete them as 'friends' or stop 'following' them. Use your own guideline, keeping your duty of care and ethical obligations in mind;
- do not 'friend', 'follow' or subscribe to posts from under- aged students/children;
- decide whether you will 'follow/ friend/like' or subscribe to all of your users. Think about whether there are any risks, such as whether they might be children, minors or parents, whether they might have inappropriate content on their profile or site.

Inappropriate Content

Failure to comply with the above is an invasion of privacy and may infringe FROEBEL Policy.

If staff notice inappropriate or unlawful online content, or content published in breach of this policy, this should be reported to their manager, or the HR Coordinator or the Managing Director.

Inappropriate content includes any content that could be seen as:

- pornographic, obscene or offensive;
- harassment (e.g. racial, religious, sexual orientation physical characteristics, gender, ability, disability, economic status);
- impersonating by using another person's online profile to access social networking or
- intimidation or threatening behaviour;
- abusive, offensive in nature or contains offensive language;
- contains personal and/or cultural attacks or insults;
- promoting hate of any kind;

- potentially libellous or defamatory;
- off-topic or spam;
- unauthorised copyright material or detrimental in any way.

Roles regarding the administration of Social Media sites

Social media sites that are in FROEBEL's name (or related to FROEBEL's business activities) can only be created with prior approval of the Managing Director.

Ownership and administration rights must be solely assigned to a FROEBEL board member (usually the Managing Director). Editor and other page roles can only be assigned to other employees by that administrator or the respective social media site. Employees who have been assigned the role of editor, moderator, advertiser, analyst or live contributor (or equivalent roles on social media sites other than Facebook. Must resign from their roles if:

- Their job responsibilities no longer include assuming the assigned role, or they resign from their employment, or
- Their employment is terminated or terminates, or
- They are being made redundant, or
- They are instructed to do so by the Managing Director.

▲ SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- Children Education and Care Services National Law
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea9770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/B73164FE5DA2112DCA2577BA0014D9ED/\\$FILE/10-069a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea9770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/B73164FE5DA2112DCA2577BA0014D9ED/$FILE/10-069a.pdf)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/fullNational>
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- Australian Government initiative e-safety
www.esafety.gov.au

▲ ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Professional Boundaries
- Computer and IT
- Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

▲ POLICY REVIEW

- The Centre (together with educators) will review this policy every 12 months.
- The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor ensure that all educators maintain and implement this policy and its procedures at all times.
- Families are encouraged to collaborate with the Centre to review the policy and procedures.

- **Last review:** 27.06.2023
- **Next review:** 27.06.2024