Policy Title	Social Media Policy
Policy Category	Information & Privacy
Manual Reference	Section 7
Applies To	All staff, independent contractor General Practitioners, allied health providers, contractors and workplace participants across all practice locations
Related Standards	RACGP 5th Edition – Information Management RACGP 6th Edition - Information Governance & Digital Health
Document Owner	Practice Manager
Approved By	Practice Manager / Principal GP
Effective Date	16/10/2026
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Version	1.1

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy outlines expectations regarding the use of social media by workplace participants.

1.2 This policy is implemented within a healthcare environment and supports the protection of patient information, professional standards and the reputation of the practice.

1.3 This policy applies across all practice locations and aligns with the RACGP Standards for General Practice (5th and 6th Edition), including information security, privacy and governance requirements.

2. Social Media Policy

2.1 The Social Media Policy ('Policy') relates to Village Medical ('Village Medical') and, where relevant, operates in conjunction with the Internet, Email and Computer Use Policy and the Contract of Employment or contract for service.

3. Commencement of Policy

3.1 This Policy will commence from 22/03/2026. It replaces all other policies, if any, relating to access to social media platforms and social networking sites (whether written or not).

4. Scope

4.1 The Policy relates to all full-time, part-time and casual employees of Village Medical ('Village Medical Employees'), as well as contractors, temporaries and subcontractors working for or on behalf of either a company or any associated companies in the Village Medical Centre workplace ('Village Medical Contractors').

4.2 The Policy also applies to Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors' participation in social media inside or outside of any Village Medical workplace and includes the use of a Contractor's or an Employee's own device.

4.3 This policy applies across all practice locations.

4.4 The Policy does not form part of any contract of employment with Village Medical, Nor does it form part of any contract for service with Village Medical

5. Definitions

5.1 In this Policy:

a) **'Blogging'** means the act of using we blog or 'blog'. A blog is a frequently updated website featuring diary-style commentary, audio-visual material and links to articles on other websites.

b) **'Confidential Information'** includes but is not limited to trade secrets of Village Medical ; non-public information about the organisation and affairs of Village Medical such as pricing information such as internal cost and pricing rates, production scheduling software, special supply information; marketing or strategy plans; exclusive supply agreements or arrangements; commercial and business plans; commission structures; contractual arrangements with third parties; tender policies and arrangements; financial information and data; sales and training materials; technical data; schematics; proposals and intentions; designs; policies and procedures documents; concepts not reduced to material form; information which is personal information for the purposes of privacy law; and all other information obtained from Village Medical or obtained in the course of working or providing services to Village Medical that is by its nature confidential.

c) **'Computer'** includes all laptop computers and desktop computers.

d) **'Hand Held Device'** includes all such devices which are used by Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors , inside and outside working hours, in the workplace of Village Medical Centre (or a related corporation of Village Medical) or at any other place. Such devices include, but are not limited to, mobile phones, Blackberrys, Palm Pilots, PDAs, iPhones, tablets, iPads, other handheld electronic devices, smart phones and similar products, and any other device used to access social networking sites or a social media platform.

e) **'Intellectual Property'** means all forms of intellectual property rights throughout the world including copyright, patent, design, trademark, trade name, and all Confidential Information including know-how and trade secrets.

f) **'Person'** includes any natural person, company, partnership, association, trust, business, or other organisation or entity of any

description and a person's legal personal representative(s), successors, assigns or substitutes.

g) **'Social Networking Site'** and **'Social Media Platform'** include but are not limited to Facebook, My Space, Bebo, Friendster, Flickr, LinkedIn, XING, Blogger, WordPress, YouTube, Twitter, Yahoo Groups, Google Groups Whirlpool, Instant Messaging Services, Message Board, Podcasts, 'Wikis' (e.g. Wikipedia) and other similar sites.

6. Representing Village Medical Centre in social media

6.1 In consideration of the type of business of Village Medical, any comments about or in connection with Village Medical made on a social media platform must be factual and consistent information with Village Medical's goals and objectives. This means protecting commercially sensitive information in accordance with a Village Medical Employee's contract of employment and a Village Medical Contractor's contract for service.

6.2 All Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors are restricted from making comments on behalf of Village Medical or using Village Medical's branding, (including the corporate logo, internal logo and registered trademarks), in any social media platform unless otherwise authorised.

a) Only the following Village Medical Employees are authorised to speak on behalf of Village Medical on Social media platforms: Business Owner and Practice Manager.

6.3 Village Medical recognises that circumstances may arise in which Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Centre Contractors make mention of Village Medical in social media.

6.4 Unless authorised by Village Medical, any comments made by Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors must contain a disclaimer that they are not representing Village Medical and do not have authority to speak on behalf of Village Medical, and the views of the Village Medical Employee/Village Medical Contractor do not represent the views of Village Medical

6.5 Workplace participants must not disclose or reference patient information or clinical matters in any form on social media.

7. Acknowledgement

7.1 All Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors acknowledge that:

a) they are not to make comments which might reflect negatively on Village Medical's reputation or make deliberately false or misleading claims about Village Medical, or its products or services. Any recognised inaccurate comments must have all reasonable efforts made by the Village Medical Employee or Village Medical Contractor to correct the statement;

b) they must not disclose confidential or commercially sensitive information about Village Medical including Village Medicals Confidential Information or Intellectual Property. This includes any patient information or material that may identify a patient directly or indirectly. This obligation continues after the employment or engagement ceases;

c) they must not endorse or cite any client, partner or supplier of Village Medical without the explicit prior permission of the Director;

d) they must observe the relevant privacy, defamation and copyright laws; and

e) they must comply with relevant discrimination laws and Village Medical policies that relate to discrimination and harassment.

8. Material posted by others

8.1 Inappropriate or disparaging content and information stored or posted by others (including non-employees) in the social media environment may also damage Village Medical Centre's reputation.

8.2 If you become aware of any such material which may damage Village Medical or its reputation, you must immediately notify your manager and Director

9. Standards in relation to blogs and sites operated by Village Medical

9.1 Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors must not engage in prohibited conduct. Further:

a) Only Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors who are authorised by Director are permitted to publish a blog or social network entry on any sites operated by Village Medical , and the content of any such blog or entry must first be approved by Director before publishing.

b) Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors **must** list their name and job title and add the following disclaimer: '*The opinions expressed here are the personal opinions of the writer. Content published here does not necessarily represent the views and opinions of Village Medical.*'

c) Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors may participate in the Village Medical-related public communications during normal work time. However, if doing so interferes with any of the Village Medical Employees/Village Medical Contractors' normal work responsibilities, Village Medical reserves the right to withdraw the Village Medical Employees/Village Medical Contractors' access to the communication facilities.

d) Village Medical Employees/Village Medical Contractors will be personally legally responsible for any content they publish and need to be aware of applicable laws.

e) Workplace participants must maintain professional boundaries and behaviour consistent with a healthcare environment at all times.

9.2 If Village Medical Employees/Village Medical Contractors subsequently discovers a mistake in their blog or social networking entry, they are required to immediately inform Director and then take steps authorised by Director to correct the mistake. All alterations should indicate the date on which the alteration was made.

10. External social media platforms

10.1 When using external Social Media Platforms, including, but not limited to, social networks and Blogging sites, Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors should not disparage or make adverse comments about Village Medical any Village Medical Employee or any Village Medical Contractor. This includes where such comments are made whilst a Village Medical Employee or Village Medical Contractor is contributing to a Social Media Platform using a Village Medical computer and internet resources and similarly whilst using a non-Village Medical computer or handheld device.

10.2 Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors should be aware that, in accordance with the Internet, Email and Computer Use Policy, internet usage is continuously logged and archived by Village Medical for monitoring purposes on an ongoing basis.

10.3 If it comes to Village Medical 's attention that a Village Medical Employee or Village Medical Contractor has made inappropriate and/or unauthorised comments about Village Medical or a Village Medical Employee or Village Medical Contractor, Village Medical may choose to take action against such person as outlined in the Policy. Action will not be limited to contributions made on a Social Media Platform made whilst using Village Medical computer and internet resources but may include action taken as a consequence of inappropriate and/or unauthorised contributions made about Village Medical, a Village Medical Employee or Village Medical Contractor via a non-Village Medical computer or handheld device.

11. Village Medical employees' and Village Medical contractors' responsibilities

11.1 Village Medical Employees and Village Medical Contractors are personally responsible for reporting any inaccurate, misleading or deceptive information they encounter about Village Medical and its products and services to the Director

12. Warning

12.1 Apart from the potentially adverse effects a blog or social networking entry may have on Village Medical , inappropriate blogs on internal or external sites can also have adverse consequences for a Village Medical Employee or Village Medical Contractors in terms of future career prospects, as the material remains widely and permanently accessible to other site users.

12.2 Village Medical may use and disclose an Employee's or Contractor's social media posts where that use, or disclosure is:

a) for a purpose related to the employment of any employee or related to Village Medical's business activities; or

b) use or disclosure to a law enforcement agency in connection with an offence; or

c) use or disclosure in connection with legal proceedings; or

d) use or disclosure reasonably believed to be necessary to avert an imminent threat of serious violence to any person or substantial damage to property.

12.3 While users are permitted to use Village Medical computer network for limited and reasonable personal use, Employees and Contractors must be mindful that any information (personal or other) they disclose while using Village Medicals computer network may be used and/or disclosed as provided for in clause 13.2 above. An Employee or Contractor is taken to have consented to the use and disclosure of any information (personal or otherwise) that is disclosed during personal use of Village Medical's computer network.

13. Consequences of breaching the social media policy

13.1 Any breach of the Policy may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, issue of a warning, demotion, suspension or termination of employment (or, for Village Medical Contractors, the termination or non-renewal of their contract for service).

14. Village Medical contact

14.1 Any questions about this Policy should be directed to Director.

15. Evidence and Records

The practice may maintain records including:

- Reported incidents
- Complaints relating to social media use
- Investigation outcomes

Variations

Village Medical reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

Associated Documents:

- Internet, Email & Computer Use Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy