



<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>		<b><i>Appropriate Use of Social Media for Informational and Clinical Purposes</i></b>	
 		<b>CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>Original Effective Date:</b>	<b>Last Revision:</b>
Brenda Donald	January 4, 2019		

<b>I. AUTHORITY</b>	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (“CFSA” or “Agency”) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency’s mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia (“DC”) laws and regulations, including DC Code 4-1303.06; National Association of Social Workers’ Standards for Technology publication; and the DC Board of Ethics’ Advisory Opinion entitled “Social Media and Code of Conduct”.
<b>II. APPLICABILITY</b>	CFSA staff and contracted agency personnel
<b>III. RATIONALE</b>	Social media applications can be powerful and helpful tools in securing the safety of abused and neglected children in the District. They can, however, also present ethical dilemmas for practitioners. Child welfare agencies must establish clear guidance to social workers on the appropriate and allowable use of social media to define the boundaries on the extent and circumstances under which social workers may use such applications within clinical practice.
<b>IV. POLICY</b>	<p>The boundary between appropriate and inappropriate use of social media is generally determined by the intent of its use. Social media can be used appropriately as a means to disseminate public information about the Agency. It is also generally appropriate to use social media as a research tool for the purpose of locating key clients and collateral contacts.</p> <p>Social media is generally inappropriate as a means of direct communication and engagement with clients. With the exception of those assigned to the Missing Child Locator Unit, social workers are prohibited from direct communication with clients through social media platforms.</p>
<b>V. CONTENTS</b>	<p><b>A. Allowable Use of Social Media</b></p> <p><b>B. Prohibition on Client Contact/Correspondence Using Social Media</b></p> <p><b>C. Accountability and Oversight</b></p>
	<p><b>Section A: Allowable Use of Social Media</b></p> <p>1. <i>Management of Public Information:</i> Agency staff may use social media to disseminate public information and to promote Agency-sponsored campaigns, initiatives or programs. The establishment of a formal social media account or profile using the Agency name and/or logo (or the name and logo of any subsidiary administration, office, or division within CFSA) must receive prior formal approval and is subject to continuing oversight of CFSA’s Office of Public Information (OPI).</p> <p>Under the purview of CFSA OPI, Agency staff may use social media to share information with the general public regarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Agency programs, needs, accomplishments, services, and events.</li> <li>b. Research and reports related to CFSA’s mission or work tasks of the Agency.</li> <li>c. Professional development opportunities or resources.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. <i>Targeted Client Research:</i> When it is clinically indicated and appropriate to do so, Agency staff may use social media and internet web search tools to research and locate clients and family members in furtherance of a child's case plan or permanency goals. Staff may not use personal social media accounts to conduct this research if the platform reveals or is likely to reveal their personal information to the subject of the research.</p> <p>Before conducting online research using social media tools and networks, staff shall determine whether the search is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Clinically indicated (such as a part of diligent search activities for an missing or runaway client or non-engaged kin); and/or</li> <li>b. Governed by a standard of practice, such as client monitoring based on knowledge (or a reasonable suspicion) that something is unusual or a client is at risk (such as suspicions of trafficking), as opposed to satisfying personal curiosity.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Section B: Prohibition on Client Contact/Correspondence Using Social Media</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CFSA staff, with the exception of the Missing Child Locator Unit, are not to engage or otherwise contact a CFSA client or family member of a CFSA client using a public social media tool or forum. Doing so risks client confidentiality and is a violation of client privacy.</li> <li>2. CFSA staff are prohibited from any use of Agency-sponsored or personal social media accounts for the purpose of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishing and maintaining a digital linkage or online relationship with a client(s), even when overtures, invitations, or "friend requests" originate from clients themselves.</li> <li>b. Engaging in clinical or case management activities in furtherance of the Agency mission or the goals of a child/youth case plan.</li> <li>c. Sharing confidential information about the client, their family, caregivers, or foster care placements.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. This prohibition exists for any staff social media account, whether an Agency account or a personal account, or whether accessed from a CFSA device or a personal device.</li> <li>4. CFSA staff are expected to use only secure methods of communication, such as email, telephone, text messaging, or any CFSA-sanctioned application to correspond with clients for the purpose of clinical practice and case management.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Section C: Accountability and Oversight</b></p> <p>Supervisors shall counsel team members' about the appropriate use of social media.</p>

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