

## LCCS POLICY 1004

### Social Media

<b>Policy Number:</b>	1004
<b>Policy Title:</b>	Agency Use of Social Media

<b>Original Issue Date:</b>	05/23/2011
<b>Revision Dates:</b>	N/A
<b>Revision Number:</b>	0
<b>Current Effective Date:</b>	5/23/2011
<b>Obsolete/Combined Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Reason for Obsoleting/Combining:</b>	N/A
<b>See new Policy #:</b>	N/A

<b>Scope:</b>	All Staff, Board Members
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Executive Director, Public Information Officer, Information Services Manager
<b>Purpose:</b>	To establish policies and procedures to guide the Agency in use of social media as a positive public communications tool. To establish policies and procedures for staff personal use of social media.
<b>Legal Cite:</b>	

### POLICY STATEMENT

1. LCCS recognizes the value of social media as a means to improve openness, accessibility and transparency. The strategic use of social media helps the Agency foster positive relationships with key audiences such as families, social service partners, taxpayers/voters, other government agencies and employees. We seek to utilize social media to:
  - Provide information on agency services to youth and adults;
  - Reach out to persons who utilize social media as a primary method of interacting with service delivery systems;
  - Communicate information in support of the Agency's mission to protect children and promote families.
  
2. Social media plays an important part in the Agency's overall communication and customer service strategies. It complements existing practices such as media relations, a speaker's bureau, newsletters, special events and internal communications.
  
3. LCCS holds all employees responsible for ensuring that any public communication, including social networking communication, does not negatively impact the reputation of the Agency or in any way disparages the children and families we serve (past or present) or its partners, clients, etc.

4. All policies regarding confidentiality and personnel policies including but not limited to, Confidentiality (Policy 153), Sexual Harassment (Policy 486), Bias Free Communication (Policy 488), and Workplace Violence (Policy 174) and those contained in the Employee Handbook should be considered when employees post any information within a social networking environment that may concern the work of the Agency, another employee or any child or family served by the Agency. Information regarding persons receiving services must never be disclosed. The privacy rights of fellow employees must be respected. This also applies to comments posted on blogs, forums, and social networking sites of others.
5. LCCS encourages all employees to consider the manner and the speed by which information can be relayed using technology and how such information can be misunderstood. Therefore, no one guideline or practice as outlined in this policy can handle every eventuality when dealing with social media. It is expected that staff utilize common sense, consider the Agency's mission and seek guidance when in doubt about their actions prior to posting information on a social media site.

## **PROCEDURE**

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### **Agency Use of Social Media**

1. **Central responsibility:** The Executive Director and Public Information Officer are responsible for all Agency social media pages, feeds, and platforms.

Only the Executive Director or Public Information Officer or their designee may send messages and/or respond to comments via Agency social media platforms and create new pages, feeds, groups, etc. on social networks. The Executive Director has final say on selection of new social media tools with consultation from the Public Information Officer and the Information Services staff. Information Services carries responsibility for technical and security issues.

2. **Standard practices:** The following is a list of practices to be followed by employees engaged with any social media page/presence of the Agency, but should not be considered exhaustive.
  - Adhere to all aspects of confidentiality;
  - Protect sensitive or personal information;
  - Monitor and moderate user comments including negative comments, as long as they are constructive;
  - Correct mistakes;
  - Be considerate;
  - Respect copyrights and trademarks;
  - Use work email addresses and strong passwords;
  - Avoid advertisements, sponsorships and endorsements;
  - Stay within area of expertise;
  - Stay within scope of Agency's role;
  - Avoid use for political purposes.

3. **Content management:** Only content related to Agency programs and available services will be distributed via the Agency's social media channels. Examples include:
  - Announcements and discussions related to upcoming events, such as training programs, available services, workshops and awareness displays;
  - Media releases;
  - Links to videos explaining agency programs;
  - Public service messages relating to topics such as child abuse prevention and general information related to child welfare, agency programs, services, and parenting-related information.
4. **Branding:** All agency social media presences will have a consistent look and feel, including use of the Agency's logo.
5. **Implied endorsements:** If possible, the Agency's content will not appear next to advertisements. The Agency recognizes that certain social media platforms incorporate advertising into their page structure and such advertising is determined by the viewer's individual social media profile. Should the Agency become aware of inappropriate advertising content appearing on its pages, the Public Information Officer or designee will contact the provider and work with them to delete such content.
6. **Monitoring:** The Public Information Officer or designee will closely monitor social media. He/she will view agency social networking pages at least twice each weekday and periodically check sites on weekends. The PIO shall ensure that there is coverage for this activity during vacations, leaves or other interruptions in his or her standard routine for monitoring. Should the PIO be unable to establish a designee due to illness, the Executive Director shall appoint an interim monitor of agency social media.
7. **Public records:** Social media users should be aware that these types of communications may be considered public records.
8. **Comments policy:**

LCCS recognizes any electronic interface with the community provides both opportunities and challenges. There is a great need to respect the privacy and confidentiality of our clients and staff, while maintaining openness and transparency in the portions of the Agency where this is not only possible but proper for a public service.

Comments to any agency social media site shall be monitored for the following content:

1. Case-specific or other confidential information;
2. Information which may be harmful to the clients of the Agency;
3. Information personally or professionally harmful to staff;
4. Spam or the inclusion of links to other sites;

5. Content that is clearly off topic;
6. Any support or advocacy for illegal activity
7. The promotion of particular services, products, or political organizations;
8. The infringement on copyrights or trademarks;
9. The use of personally identifiable information

The site shall have a notice prominently posted prior to any comments section indicating the following:

"The safety of children is our paramount concern. Therefore, we do not accept reports of suspected abuse or neglect through this site. Do not post concerns for children on this page. If you have concerns about a child, we want to speak with you. Getting the right information, as quickly as possible, helps us work to keep children safe."

"Please help us by calling 419-213-CARE (2273) or dial 911 if you believe a child is in immediate danger."

"Reports can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. Please provide as much information as possible to help us identify the child, his or her location, and the nature of the allegation."

In addition, the following shall be posted after the above reporting information.

"We welcome you to the LCCS Facebook (or the name of other media) page. The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest to LCCS. Please do not submit comments, questions, personal information, or information concerning other persons."

LCCS reserves the right to delete any content that contains vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, or religious group.

Further, LCCS also reserves the right to delete content that:

1. Reveals case-specific or other confidential information;
2. May be harmful to the families and children served by the Agency;
3. Is personally or professionally harmful to staff;
4. Includes spam or links to other sites;
5. Is clearly off topic;
6. Supports or advocates illegal activity
7. Promotes particular services, products, or political organizations;
8. Infringes on copyrights or trademarks;
9. Uses personally identifiable information.

If you have any questions concerning the operation of this site, or you note content which is of concern to you in any way please contact the Public Information Officer at LCCS by calling 419-213-3253."

## **Staff Personal Use of Social Media**

LCCS recognizes that many of its staff members do, and will, utilize social media on a personal basis. The Agency recognizes the rights of its staff to engage with social media on their personal time; however, it also has a duty to balance the critical work of the Agency against any content on these sites that is posted by its staff and which may cause harm to the Agency, its reputation or its staff. Personal use of social media must be tempered by ethical guidelines and professional conduct expectations.

### **The following are prohibited when LCCS employees utilize personal social media or the internet:**

- Releasing confidential information of any kind or discussing their daily activities as they relate to the children and families we serve. Even the best attempts to mask identities often fail and the perception that these conversations, comments and posts bring is detrimental to those we serve;
- Attaching their LCCS e-mail address to any personal communications, profiles or websites;
- Posting photographs or other material which would cause harm to other employees, or to the Agency;
- Commenting on operations of the Agency;

### **In addition staff members are cautioned that:**

- Employees' personal presence on social media and the internet can result in disciplinary actions if content is determined to reveal confidential information or discredit the Agency;
- Social media and the internet in general are not conducive to, nor should they be used to handle workplace issues or disagreements;
- It is advisable to post a statement on personal social media sites, blogs and web pages that, the views expressed on this web page/site/personal profile belong solely to you and are not those of your employer;
- It is advised not to friend other professionals in the community who could utilize posts to your site that could discredit you or bring harm to LCCS in any way, including through legal proceedings;
- It is advisable to know the privacy policies and settings of any social media site, blog or web page, and be aware that as private as you may believe that these sites may claim to be, there is ample evidence that once posted, information is accessible for indefinite, if not infinite periods of time;
- Communication in these venues may be considered public record and open to subpoena and scrutiny;
- As outlined in Policy #1001 and the County Internet Use Policy, LCCS and Lucas County may monitor any activity on these sites that is conducted using agency equipment at anytime to include breaks, or lunch.

## **CASE PRACTICE GUIDES**

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### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **BLOG (Short for weblog)**

A frequently updated online journal of an individual, a corporation, or an organization maintained with regular entries of commentaries, intended for public viewing.

#### **FACEBOOK**

A social networking website intended to connect friends, family, and business associates.

#### **LINKEDIN**

A business-oriented social networking site.

#### **PLATFORM**

A term of technology referring to blogs or podcasts as examples. Communication platforms could include telephone, internet or fax.

#### **PODCAST**

An online audio file used as a means of sharing information. Often used as a means of interviewing an expert in a given field, or creating an online audio seminar on a given topic.

#### **SKYPE**

A software application voice communication service that allows video and voice calls over the internet.

#### **SOCIAL NETWORKING, SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social networking is an outlet to make online connections with other people, whereas social media provides a venue for broadcasting information.

#### **TWITTER**

A service with social networking, instant messaging, and micro-blogging features.

#### **WEBCASTS**

A broadcast or transmission of media over the Internet using streaming technology. Webcasting is also used extensively in the commercial sector for investor relations presentations (such as Annual General Meetings), in E-learning (to transmit seminars), and for related communications activities.

#### **WEBINAR**

A presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the web with an interactive element.

#### **YOUTUBE**

A video sharing website portal.

**RELATED POLICIES and FORMS**

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Policy 1001: Information Services Hardware and Software

Policy 1002: Electronic Mail

Lucas County Internet Use Policy