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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy should be read in line with other worker policies in place including but not limited to disciplinary and grievance policy, IT and policies covering discrimination, bullying and harassment.

This policy will set out rules in relation to the use of all forms of social media. Failure to comply could result in disciplinary action leading to dismissal depending on circumstances.

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other and allows the sharing of data in a public forum.

Examples of social media include but are not limited to Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, You Tube, Flickr, Whatsapp, Instagram and Snapchat.

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL NETWORK AT WORK

You are permitted to access social media websites from GPS computers or other electronic devices for personal use but only at certain times.

You must limit such usage to official rest breaks, before you commence work, or after work. Remember in the course of your normal computer work regular breaks from work should be taken but must be away from your computer.

BUSINESS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

There may be times when you may need as part of your job to use social media and in these circumstances, it will be made clear as to what is or is not allowed.

You will be advised by your line manager if you are expected to make use of social media for GPS purposes (e.g. Websites or Social Media pages/feeds dedicated to GPS business or marketing purposes) and in what forums such use is allowed or not allowed.

If you are unsure about the suitability of a "post" you should discuss with your manager.

You may contribute to the us GPS social media activities by possibly providing blogs or articles. These should be approved by your manager.

If you are contacted for comments on GPS business for publication anywhere you should discuss your response with your line manager to ensure that it is appropriate and represents the values of the GPS.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

You should remember that you are representing GPS at all times and must therefore ensure the communication has a purpose and is intended for public benefit.

In both business and personal use, you should ensure the following.

- Use your common sense before you post anything and think about what you are saying to the public.
- Ensure that you do not post any disparaging or defamatory statements about GPS, workers (current and Past), Service Users (current and past) other health service within the NHS or connecting areas.
- You should not post images or links to inappropriate content. Many images available online are copyright protected and should not be used without permission.
- You must not breach confidentiality in any way.
- You must not use social media to bully, harass or to discriminate against any party.
- You must not express any strong religious or political points.
- You must not enter into any contractual agreements without the express consent of your manager.
- You must refrain from any illegal activity.
- You should not enter into any online fights, personal attacks or hostile postings.
- You should not post any offensive material including but not limited to, pornography.

The golden rule is to ask yourself whether what you are about to post could cause offence to anyone. If the answer is yes then do not make the posting.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

GPS recognises that many workers use social media in a personal capacity and again in that capacity you must not post anything that damages the reputation of the GPS or its client providers.

You are allowed to state that you work for GPS, however your online profile/username must not contain the GPS's name and you must not speak on behalf of the GPS.

You must not use your working Email address in any communication in a personal capacity.

You should not discuss your working life via social media.

Examples of social media misuse may include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Posting offensive or critical messages on GPS, competitor, or supplier or third-party sites.
- Posting content that could breach service user, colleague, or GPS confidentiality.
- Posting derogatory or inappropriate pictures or comments about colleagues, service users or third parties.
- Reposting or sharing material of an offensive, sexual, political, or religious nature and linking such content to GPS.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

GPS accepts that workers have the right to a private life, however where social media or online activities which can be linked to, or your affiliation with, cause reputational or internal/external relationship damage, disciplinary action will be considered up to summary dismissal.

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. Serious breaches of this policy could constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal.

GPS may request you to remove any posting that is deemed to be offensive or not appropriate and failure to comply may constitute an act of gross misconduct for failing to follow a reasonable management request.

Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the current protocol in place.

DATA PROTECTION

Monitoring will normally be conducted by the FWO. The information obtained through monitoring may be shared internally, including with members of the HR team, a worker's line manager, managers in the business area in which the worker works and IT staff if access to the data is necessary for performance of their roles. However, information would normally be shared in this way only if GPS has reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of the rules set out in this policy.

The information gathered through monitoring will be retained only long enough for any breach of this policy to come to light and for any investigation to be conducted.

Workers have several rights in relation to their data, including the right to make a subject access request and the right to have data rectified or erased in some circumstances. You can find further details of these rights and how to exercise them in the GPS Data Protection Policy. If workers believe that the GPS has not complied with their data protection rights, they can complain to the Information Commissioner.

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