GUIDELINES FOR USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Purpose. This operating procedure describes requirements for starting, using and maintaining social media or social networking sites.

2. Scope. This operating procedure applies to all DCF employees, including employees who post DCF-related material to personal social media or social networking sites. All DCF employees who use social media or social networking as part of their job responsibilities are expected to be familiar with and fully comply with the requirements of this operating procedure. Violations of this operating procedure can lead to revocation of account privileges and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

3. References.
   b. Section 286.011, F.S., Open meeting requirements (Sunshine Law).
   c. Section 110.227, F.S., Suspensions, dismissals, reductions in pay, demotions, layoffs, transfers, and grievances.
   d. Section 112.313, F.S., Standards of conduct for public officers, employees of agencies, and local government attorneys.
   e. Section 282.318, F.S., Enterprise security of data and information technology.
   g. Department of Children and Families Operating Procedure 15-4, Records Management.
   h. Department of Children and Families Operating Procedure 50-22, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources.
   i. Department of Children and Families Pamphlet 15-7, Records Retention Schedules Used by the Department of Children and Families.

4. Definitions. For the purposes of this operating procedure, the following definitions shall apply:

   a. Confidential Information. Information that has specific statutory exemption from the public records laws. Confidential information may only be released to individuals or entities specifically listed in the relevant statutes.
b. **Records Retention.** Ensuring that public records created or received by the Department, including records posted on or received by social media or social networking sites, are retained in accordance with the State of Florida’s record retention rules and are made available to the public in response to public record requests. Records and information posted on social media or social networking sites will have different retention schedules based on content, or a new record retention schedule may need to be created for a particular record. In order to determine retention schedules, offices or employees should consult with the Department’s records management liaison officer in the Office of General Services. Each office or employee posting to social media or social networking sites will be responsible for the retention of the records or information posted.

c. **Social Networking Sites and Social Media.** Social media and Web 2.0 are umbrella terms that define the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. Through social media, individuals or collaborations of individuals create web content, organize content, edit or comment on content, combine content, and share content. Social media and Web 2.0 use many technologies and forms, including RSS and other syndicated web feeds, blogs, wikis, photo–sharing, video–sharing, podcasts, social networking, social bookmarking, mashups, widgets, virtual worlds, micro–blogs, and more. The term also includes any Internet-based social site such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter that allows users to build virtual communities for communicating and sharing information.

5. **Account Administration / Clearance.**

   a. **Authorized Accounts.**

      (1) The DCF Office of Communications will administer one Twitter account, one Facebook account, one YouTube channel, one blog, one Flickr account and one Pinterest account.

      (2) DCF Regional communications directors/managers may administer one Facebook page.

      (3) At this time, the accounts identified in paragraphs (1) and (2) above are the only social media accounts authorized for operation.

      (4) The provisions of paragraph 2-2d of CFOP 50-22 notwithstanding, DCF employees may not create any social media accounts on behalf of their division, program or office.

   b. **Account Management.**

      (1) The DCF Office of Communications must approve of Regional strategy and design before the page can be promoted/published.

      (2) Regional offices should commit to posting on their Facebook pages at least three times a week and responding to public inquiries within 24 hours Monday – Friday.

      (3) Facebook pages must be monitored at all times Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm, although monitoring after hours and on weekends is strongly recommended.

      (4) Accounts must be monitored to ensure abuse is not reported through these media. All pages must state that abuse must be reported to the Hotline.
6. **Appropriate Content for DCF Social Media/Networking Account.**

   a. **Appropriate Content.**

      (1) Local information and news promoting regional offices, circuits and statewide divisions.

      (2) Information from E-Newsletters.

      (3) News releases and media articles/videos/audio/etc.

      (4) Event information/promotion/recaps.

      (5) Speeches by DCF leadership.

      (6) General information posted on the Department’s website, including highlighting DCF services and responsibilities.

      (7) Information pertaining to emergencies.

      (8) Photographs, as well as video or audio recordings.

      (9) Responses/feedback to citizen/follower inquiries, etc.

   b. **Prohibited Content.**

      (1) Offensive or abusive language.

      (2) Graphic, obscene or explicit content.

      (3) Personal attacks against any individual or group.

      (4) Endorsements of products, services or business entities unless approved by DCF management.

      (5) Solicitations or advertisements unless approved by DCF management.

      (6) Endorsements or lobbying for political candidates, parties or groups.

      (7) Personal, sensitive or confidential information.

      (8) Copyrighted content without necessary permission and/or acknowledgement.

      (9) Photographs of clients without the permission of the client or the client’s guardian.

7. **Appropriate Conduct When Using a Social Media/Networking Account.**

   a. **Appropriate Conduct When Using a Department Social Media Account.**

      (1) Always maintain an honest, respectful and professional demeanor in your communications, understanding that you are the face of the Department when posting on Department accounts.

      (2) Interact by responding promptly to posted comments or questions.
(3) Always check the factual accuracy of the material you are posting, and receive approval from supervisors regarding the material before posting.

(4) Post only relevant information. Do not post information that is off-topic.

(5) Pause and think before posting material or comments. If the material or comments give you pause, do not post them.

(6) Never offer opinion when posting. The staff doing the posting should only address matters within their area of expertise.

(7) Do not use unverified website resources as a legal basis for exclusion, denial of services, and denial of employment or screening of persons engaged with the Department in any way.

(8) Do not share passwords for access to social media accounts unless approval from a Supervisor is first obtained. Immediately upon termination of employment of the social media coordinator, passwords should be changed.

b. Appropriate Conduct When Posting Department-Related Information on a Personal Social Media Account.

(1) Do not use a Department email address to establish a personal account on a social media or social networking site.

(2) When posting information that is Department-related, employees must still follow the Department’s Rules of Employee Conduct, located in Section 112.313, Florida Statutes, even when posting during non-work hours. A professional demeanor is always important.

(3) Employees should take caution when posting Department-related information on their personal accounts. Do not post information that is confidential or otherwise could lead to the identification of a Department client. For example: If a Child Protective Investigator works on a case and later talks about that specific case or writes on Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin or any other social networking site, and states something that only the investigator would know, then confidentiality may have been breached. Other examples include the following statements: “I had to remove an infant from a house full of roaches today.” or “I had to visit a little girl at Hawks Rise Elementary today.” or “I removed twins today…they were so cute.” These same rules regarding confidentiality apply to all program areas including ACCESS and Adult Protective Services.

(4) Employees should not engage in conduct that would reflect negatively on the Department.

(5) When posting Department-related information on personal accounts, include a disclaimer stating that the postings are your own and do not necessarily represent the Department’s position.


a. Record Retention. All accounts must be maintained in accordance with the State’s records retention rules and made available to the public in response to a records request.

b. Personal Accounts. Employees who post DCF-related information on their personal accounts may also be triggering the requirements of Florida’s public records and retention laws. If an employee posts official DCF materials on a personal account (e.g., meeting notices; announcements; documents) for a business-related purpose (e.g., to reach more community partners), the employee is
responsible for ensuring that all posts, as well as all business-related responses, are retained and made available in accordance with Florida’s public records and retention laws.


a. While DCF encourages followers to actively engage in open communication via its social media accounts by contributing comments and conversations, we remind viewers that the statements and opinions expressed in posted comments represent those of the party responsible for the posting and do not reflect the overarching views or goals of DCF or the State of Florida. DCF does not guarantee that information posted by users is accurate, and disclaims any liability for loss or damages resulting from reliance on any such information. DCF does not endorse or support any private or commercial entity or the information, products or services contained on those websites that may be reached through links on our page.

  b. Comments may be deleted from DCF social media accounts if:

      (1) They are obscene in nature or serve as an attack against any person or group.

      (2) They promote illegal activity or violate copyright law. The Department is not responsible for copyright infringement posted by an outside party.

      (3) They promote or oppose any person or party, or promote services or companies.

      (4) They do not relate directly to the topic of the site.

b. All posts are subject to the Terms of Service of the host site. For more information, consult the host website’s Terms of Service.

d. DCF reserves the right to modify its social media policy at any time.

(Signed original copy on file)

DAVID E. WILKINS
Secretary