GROVE Neurodivergent Mentoring & Education

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Produced by: J. Garner
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Review: June 2025 or earlier if updates are required

RECORD OF UPDATES:		
DATE:	**BY WHOM:**	**DETAILS:**

GROVE Neurodivergent Mentoring & Education (hereafter "GROVE") is committed to providing services at the highest standard, in a safe and happy environment. Everything we do is guided by our values:

NEURO-AFFIRMING CONNECTION COMMUNITY GROWTH

This policy applies to all staff (employed, contractors, consultants, volunteers and other personnel that is associated with GROVE – together "**Staff**"), as well as any third parties who enter into business or voluntary relationships with GROVE.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Employees' and contractors' use of social media on our behalf can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information, and reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.

1.2 To minimise these risks, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as "**staff"** in this policy) must adhere to this policy.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment or of any contractor's agreement and it may be amended at any time.

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

2.1 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

2.2 This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during office hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.

2.3 Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

2.4 Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action or constitute a breach of contract entitling us to terminate a consultant's or contractor's contact.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH RELATED POLICIES AND AGREEMENTS

SOCIAL MEDIA SHOULD NEVER BE USED IN A WAY THAT BREACHES ANY OF OUR OTHER POLICIES. IF AN INTERNET POST WOULD BREACH ANY OF OUR POLICIES IN ANOTHER FORUM, IT WILL ALSO BREACH THEM IN AN ONLINE FORUM.

3.1 Staff should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the organisation and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the organisation.

3.2 Employees who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

4. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

We recognise that employees may work long hours and occasionally may desire to use social media for personal activities at the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. We authorise such occasional use so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity. While using social media at work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the organisation's business are also prohibited.

5. MONITORING

5.1 The contents of our IT resources and communications systems are our property. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.

5.2 We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

5.3 We may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

5.4 Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the organisation.

6. BUSINESS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1 If your duties require you to speak on behalf of the organisation in a social media environment, you must seek approval for such communication from Jessica Garner who may impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to your activities.

6.2 Likewise, if you are contacted for comments about the organisation for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, direct the inquiry to Jessica Garner and do not respond without written approval.

7. RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

7.1 The following sections of the policy provide staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

7.2 Protecting our business reputation:

(a) Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:

(i) our organisation;

(ii) our clients;

(iii) suppliers and vendors; and

(iv) other affiliates and stakeholders,

but staff should also avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our business reputation, even indirectly.

(b) Staff should make it clear in social media postings that they are speaking on their own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal e-mail address when communicating via social media.

(c) Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media. Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by the masses (including the organisation itself, future employers and social acquaintances) for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.

(d) If you disclose your affiliation as an employee of our organisation, you must also state that your views do not represent those of your employer. For example, you could state, "my views do not represent the views of my employer". You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to clients and colleagues.

(e) Avoid posting comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views on such topics do not represent those of the organisation, your comments could still damage our reputation.

(f) If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication.

(g) If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on our organisation, you should advise Jessica Garner.

7.3 Respecting intellectual property and confidential information:

(a) Staff should not do anything to jeopardise our valuable trade secrets and other confidential information and intellectual property through the use of social media.

(b) In addition, staff should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other companies and individuals, which can create liability for the organisation, as well as the individual author.

(c) Do not use our logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without prior written permission.

7.4 Respecting colleagues, clients, partners and suppliers:

(a) Do not post anything that your colleagues or our customers, clients, business partners or suppliers would find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity.

(b) Do not post anything related to your colleagues or our customers, clients, business partners or suppliers without their written permission.

7.5 Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults:

(a) Staff are not permitted to have contact with children, young people and their parents/carers/guardians via personal social media accounts. This includes accepting follow or friend requests:

(b) In the event a child, young person or parent/carer/guardian makes contact in this way it must be reported to Jessica Garner immediately;

(c) If this is already the case prior to commencing work with the child or young person then the staff member must make Jessica Garner aware so that decisions about appropriate use of our services can be made.

7.6 Comply with applicable law and regulations:

(a) Do not breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;

(b) Do not harass or bully other staff or any other person in any way;

(c) Do not unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties;

(d) Do not breach our Data protection policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague online);

(e) Do not breach any other laws, regulations, codes or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).

(f) Comply fully with the CAP Code in every marketing communication made via social media.