

 LauraLynn <small>IRELAND'S CHILDREN'S HOSPICE</small>	Social Media Policy	Ref No: 2.4
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1.0 Policy Statement

LauraLynn, Ireland's Children's Hospice (the Service) recognises the power of social media as a communication tool in promoting the Service, our work and future services. Social media channels allow us to connect with supporters in a timely and efficient manner. We can share news and information easily and quickly, delivering on our commitment to transparency.

The Service also recognises that many of its employees use social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, Threads, LinkedIn and YouTube to name but a few. Misuse of social media can cause significant injury to third parties and can have significant impact on organisational and professional reputations. This is particularly relevant in safeguarding service user care and personal information. The Service is potentially liable for injury caused by misuse or abuse of social and digital media channels by its employees.

LauraLynn supports honest, transparent and knowledgeable dialogue on social media and has developed this policy to help clarify how best staff, volunteers and families can appropriately use social media platforms for the good of the Service, our service users, families, staff and volunteers.

An employee or service users' use of personal social media sites could become a problem if it:

- Interferes with the employee's work.
- Is used to harass or discriminate against staff, volunteers, service users or their families.
- Creates a hostile work environment.
- Divulges confidential information about the Service, service users, their families or staff.
- Divulges personal data about any service users, their families or staff without their consent.
- Publishes images of service users, their families, volunteers or staff without their consent.
- Harms the goodwill and reputation of our Service.
- Damages the relationship of trust and confidence between the Service and staff, volunteers or families.
- Includes false or disparaging comments about the Service or its users.

2.0 Scope

2.1 The term "staff" used throughout this policy is a general title but refers to all individuals with an association with the Service e.g. Directors, employees, volunteers, students and external contractors. The term "families" used throughout this policy is a general title but refers to a service user and their extended family members with an association with the Service. The service recognises that different groups may use social media in different ways. The following groups fall within the remit of this policy:

- Users of the Service sites and profile pages
- Users of personal accounts created on third party sites

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3.0 Definitions

3.1 *Social Media* is the collective term referring to websites and applications that enable users to create, share and interact with content or to participate in social and professional networking. Prominent examples include: Facebook; Instagram; TikTok; X; LinkedIn; Threads; YouTube; Pinterest; and personal blogs.

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 *Chief Executive Officer (CEO)*: Overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented.

4.2 *Marketing & Communications*: Responsible for planning and managing the content delivered on the Services' social media platforms and for ensuring support, assistance and training is available to all departments to ensure they are in a position to comply with this policy.

4.3 *All Staff*: It is the responsibility of all staff (i.e. directors, employees, volunteers, students and external contractors) to ensure they use safe social media practices and adhere to this policy at all times.

4.4 *Families*: it is the responsibility of all families and service users to ensure they use safe social media practices and adhere to this policy at all times.

4.5 *All Staff*: From time to time staff will be required to take photographs/videos of service users or at events for the Services to showcase on the Services' social media platforms. All photos/videos captured shall be saved on the dedicated SharePoint or Data Asset Management resource and/or shared with a member of the Marketing and Communications Team and not saved on personal devices once sent to the relevant management system.

5.0 Legal & Policy Basis

5.1 Information posted to social networking sites must adhere to the legislation in force at the time. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003
- The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004
- Defamation Act 2009
- Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989

5.2 Information posted to social networking sites must adhere to the Service's **Code of Conduct** and

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relevant policies in force at the time. Particular attention must be paid to the following (though this is not an exhaustive list):

- 3.3 Code of Conduct
- 3.22 Dignity at Work – Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
- 2.2 General Data Protection Policy
- 2.5 Use of Information Technology, Internet/Data and Email Policy
- LauraLynn Terms and Conditions Booklet for Families and Service Users

6.0 Representing the Service

6.1 The Service has its own managed social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, Threads, LinkedIn, YouTube) to meet our organisational objectives. These are the official representation and voice of the Service, representing the Service only. They are managed by the Head of Marketing and Communications or designee, who grants access to other members of staff to administer groups on the platforms and to post content on a case by case basis.

6.2 The Marketing and Communications Department will ensure that any official comments made online meet our obligations under the Data Protection Act, especially in relation to private service user information. It will also be cognisant of any copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights in the online social media space. It will ensure that information given in an official capacity through social media is accurate and up-to-date.

6.3 Photographs/videos taken for LauraLynn use should be shared with a member of the Marketing and Communications Team who will solely post to LauraLynn channels once parent/guardian permission is confirmed.

6.4 Photographs/Videos taken for use on LauraLynn social media platforms should not be left on personal phones or devices and should be deleted as soon as they are shared with the Marketing and Communications Department.

6.5 All requests for references or recommendations, even those that are received through social media platforms, should be handled formally and in line with normal procedures in place at the Service.

7.0 Social Media at Work

7.1 Personal blogging or social media usage is not a business related activity and must not be done during working hours on the Service's computers or IT facilities or interfere with the employee's primary job responsibilities – unless it directly relates to Service business and is pre-approved. This includes social media usage on Service devices, but also social media access through Service or personal mobile phones, personal laptops or other technology.

7.2 Employees must not use Service equipment such as computers, phones etc. for any non- work related

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activities. While on duty the use of personal mobile / camera phones, with the exception of emergency calls, or personal laptops is strictly forbidden.

7.3 WhatsApp is a valuable tool for workplace communication and is used as a secondary channel of internal communication within LauraLynn (for example: team communication, important or urgent organisational updates) and in communicating with families. When used in a work context, it should be used in a professional manner. Inappropriate usage should be reported to your line manager. It is essential to use this platform professionally and securely. Employees should adhere to the following best practices:

- **Work-Related Conversations:** Use WhatsApp primarily for work-related discussions, such as project updates, task coordination, and urgent matters.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Avoid sharing sensitive or confidential information via WhatsApp. Use secure channels for such communication.
- **Professional Tone:** Maintain a professional tone in messages, similar to how you would communicate via email or in person.
- **Avoid Distractions:** Limit personal conversations during work hours to maintain productivity.
- **Security Measures:** Enable two-step verification, avoid public Wi-Fi for work-related chats, and regularly update the app to protect against security risks.
- **Remember, these guidelines promote effective communication while safeguarding sensitive information.**

8.0 Personal social media usage

8.1 Online content is rarely, if ever, private, is permanent and cannot be easily retracted. Staff should bear this in mind when posting any content. Once something is posted to the internet, even if initially that posting is controlled to be accessed only by certain people (e.g. "Friends" only) an employee cannot control where that information may be further used. As a result, even if privacy settings are used, employees should still be mindful about what material is being posted. Do not publish any confidential information about the Service unless pre-approved by the CEO or Head of Marketing and Communications.

8.2 You should not use the Service logo or your business email address on your social media/networking sites. Since social media/networking sites are a public space we require that you are respectful to the Service and avoid bringing it into disrepute.

8.3 In any personal blogs, posts, comments, recommendations or referrals, employees should not make reference to the Service's activities/ business, employees, families, service users.

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- 8.4** In particular, if employees identify themselves as employees of the Service, any personal blogs, posts, comments, recommendations or referrals must contain disclaimers which make it clear that the opinions expressed are solely those of the author/individual and do not represent the views of the Service.
- 8.5** Staff must not establish any conflicting social media platforms to the Service's.
- 8.6** You should not post any contact details, photographs/videos involving staff, service users, their families or visitors to our Service on your personal social media/networking site.
- 8.7** Do not post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive profane, threatening, racially/ethnically hateful or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material on any site under an identity which can be tied to your employment with this Service. This includes any posting under a screen name behind which is a profile, even if "private", that includes your actual identity, whether or not that profile itself identifies you as an employee of the Service.
- 8.8** Employees must at all times comply with the law in regard to copyright/ plagiarism. Posting of someone else's work without permissions is not allowed. Other relevant laws include those related to libel and defamation of character.
- 8.9** All postings on social media/networking sites must comply with our policy relating to confidentiality. Please consult our Code of Conduct and our General Data Protection Policy as to what constitutes confidentiality and use of personal information.
- 8.10** Do not forget that you are responsible for what you write or present on social media/networking sites. Putting material on these sites amounts to publication. Staff should, at all times, be aware that defamatory statements can lead to lawsuits against them as the author of the statement by any individual that views your social media/networking posts as defamatory, harassing, libellous or creating a hostile work environment.
- 8.11** All Service policies which regulate off duty conduct apply to social media/networking activity including, but not limited to, policies relating to illegal harassment, code of conduct, non- discrimination and protecting confidential and /or proprietary information.
- 8.12** Personal details of staff or families (incl. names, photos, contact details, conditions etc.) are not to be posted/shared to social media channels without express consent of the staff member/volunteer/family/visitor.
- 8.13** Most social media/networking sites require that users, when they sign up, agree to abide by a Terms of Service (TOS) document. Staff are solely responsible for reading, knowing and complying with the TOS of the sites they use.
- 8.14** If you are uncertain about any post on a social networking site, please contact the Marketing and

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Communications Department.

- 8.15** Online/digital bullying etc. is not permitted and will be addressed in the same process real world behaviours are.
- 8.16** Use of social media to spread inaccuracies, lies, or with the intention to bring the Service into disrepute could have a damaging impact on our reputation and will be addressed. This can include legal recourse where necessary.
- 8.17** With the exception of the LinkedIn platform which has an educational and work-related focus, managers should not send “friend” requests to staff reporting to them while on or off duty as this may place undue pressure on the member of staff. Similarly, managers should refrain from accepting “friend” requests from subordinates.
- 9.0 Interacting with Families & Service Users on Social Media**
- 9.1** Staff should not make or accept “friend” requests from service users or relatives of service users, likewise, families should not make or accept “friend” requests from staff members of the service.
- 9.2** Contact via personal social media sites with any staff member/service user/family member outside the context of work is inappropriate and may compromise the relationship boundaries between the Service, the staff member and the service user or family.
- 9.3** We would encourage anyone who is linked to a service user/family through a personal social media account to please remove them from having access to your account. If you would like advice on how to go about this, please contact the Marketing and Communications Team.
- 9.4** If you are asked by a service user/family to join with their personal social media account, please inform them that this is not permitted under LauraLynn Social Media Policy. A link to the Social Media Policy is available within families’ Terms and Conditions booklet for the Service.
- 9.5** It is recognised good practice that staff do not provide service users or families with their personal contact details (address, telephone or email) nor do they contact service users or vice versa outside of the work context or using their own personal phone/email/social media channels.
- 9.6** In all cases, it is not permitted to publish any information - including images/videos - regarding staff members, service users or families on a personal social media site.
- 9.7** Promoting personal fundraising efforts of families through social media channels is not permitted. Our purpose is to support and care for families through our services (direct care, family support, symptom management, end of life care and bereavement support) and we are not in a position to support them in this respect.

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10.0 Compliance

- 10.1** Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- 10.2** The Service reserves the right to utilise, for disciplinary purposes any information that could have a negative effect on LauraLynn Children's Hospice Service or its staff.

11.0 Procedure

- 11.1** LauraLynn social media accounts to be managed by Marketing and Communications Team.
- 11.2** Anyone linked through a personal social media account to a family of a service user should remove them. The Social Media Policy is available to all families within their Terms and Conditions booklet. Please contact Marketing and Communications if you require any advice or support.
- 11.3** All personal profiles must state that all opinions and views expressed are their own and not that of the organisation.
- 11.4** Our Data Protection policy ensures that photography of service users in our care cannot be shared online by the organisation without the written consent of the individual/parent/ guardian. Consent forms are held by the Marketing and Communications Department and should be forwarded to same when received.
- 11.5** Families should not take photos or videos of any other child/service user at Service events unless they have received permission from the appropriate individual/parent/guardian. All staff should monitor and remind families, staff and visitors when photos are being taken.
- 11.6** Reference to service users, families, or anyone associated with the Service - including other staff - without their express consent is not permitted.

12.0 Evaluation and Audit

- 12.1** This policy and associated procedures are audited according to LauraLynn's Internal Audit programme in order to determine compliance and effectiveness.

This policy and associated procedure(s) will be amended as necessary to reflect any changes to best practice, law or substantial organisation changes. It is reviewed and evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness on an annual basis.

13.0 References

Together for Short Lives

HIQA

Data Protection–Freedom of Information Act 1988/2003 HSE

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Social Media and Digital Policy 2017

APPENDIX 1

GUIDE TO USING SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to the above rules, there are a number of key guiding principles that staff members should note when using social media tools:

- Always remember on-line content is never completely private;
- Regularly review your privacy settings on social media platforms to ensure they provide you with sufficient personal protection and limit access by others;
- Consider all online information with caution as there is no quality control process on the internet and a considerable amount of information may be inaccurate or misleading;
- At all times respect copyright and intellectual property rights of information you encounter on the internet. This may require obtaining appropriate permission to make use of information. You must always give proper credit to the source of the information used.
- Respect others - Do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the LauraLynn workplace. Show proper consideration for others' privacy.

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