

CF OPERATING PROCEDURE  
NO. 50-25

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
TALLAHASSEE, November 1, 2023

Systems Management

GUIDELINES FOR USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This operating procedure describes the Department of Children and Families (DCF or Department) requirements for starting, using, and maintaining Internet based social media or social networking sites.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY:

*(Signed copy on file)*

COLE SOUSA  
Chief Information Officer

SUMMARY OF REVISED, DELETED, OR ADDED MATERIAL

Annual review completed, and revision includes but not is limited to the following 'Account Administration / Clearance' and 'Appropriate Content for DCF Social Media/Networking Account' to reflect the Department's current policies and procedures.

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1. Purpose. This operating procedure describes the Department of Children and Families (DCF or Department) requirements for starting, using, and maintaining Internet based 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 Department 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 separation from the Department.

3. References and Authority.

- a. Chapter [119](#), Florida Statutes (F.S.), *Public Records*.
- b. Section [286.011](#), F.S., *Public meeting requirements*.
- 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., *State Cybersecurity Act*.
- f. Department of Children and Families Operating Procedure (CFOP) 15-14, *Publishing, Filing, and Distributing Reports Required by Law*.
- g. CFOP [50-22](#), *Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources*.
- h. Department Pamphlet 15-7, *Records Retention Schedules Used by the DCF*.
- i. Rule [60GG-2](#), Florida Administrative Code, "*Florida Cybersecurity Standards*".
- j. 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164, Subparts A and C, *Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Rules*.
  - i. Internal Revenue Services (IRS), Publication 1075, *Tax Information Security Guidelines for Federal, State and Local Agencies, Rev. 11-2021*.

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

- a. Confidential Information and/or Confidential Data. Information that has specific statutory exemption from the public records laws, includes but not limited to, Federal Tax Information (FTI), Protected Health Information (PHI), Personally Identifiable Information (PII), and drivers' license information and/or photographs. Confidential information may only be released to individuals or entities designated in relevant statutes, federal laws or by court order.

b. Employees. Any person employed by the Department in an established position in the Senior Management Service, Selected Exempt Service, Career Service, or paid from Other Personal Services (OPS) funds. Also, for the purposes of this operating procedure, the definition of employee includes any non-OPS temporary staff hired by the Department who have access to Department IT resources, including contracted staff and contracted vendor staff.

c. 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.

d. Social Networking Sites and Social Media. 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 involves many technologies and forms, including Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and other syndicated web feeds, message posting ("tweeting" et al.), blogs, wikis, photo-sharing, video-sharing, podcasts, social networking, and more. The term includes, but is not limited to, any Internet-based social site such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, which are sites that allow 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) At this time, the accounts identified in the paragraph above are the only social media accounts authorized for operation by DCF employees.

(3) The provisions of CFOP [50-22](#) notwithstanding, DCF employees may not create any social media accounts on behalf of their division, program office, region, or business unit.

### b. Account Management.

(1) The DCF Office of Communications must approve of strategy and design before content can be promoted, published, or significantly and substantively revised.

(2) Facebook page must be monitored at all times, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., although monitoring after hours and on weekends is strongly recommended.

(3) Accounts must be monitored to ensure known or suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment and reports of known or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult is not reported through these media. All pages must state that such known or suspected abuse must be reported to the Hotline and provide the Hotline contact information.

6. Appropriate Content for DCF Social Media/Networking Account.

a. Appropriate Content.

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

(2) Information from E-Newsletters.

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

(4) Event information, including promotions and recaps.

(5) Speeches and announcements made by Department leadership.

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

(7) Information pertaining to emergencies.

(8) Approved photographs, as well as video or audio recordings.

(9) Responses and / or feedback to citizen and follower inquiries.

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 appropriate DCF management.

(5) Solicitations or advertisements unless approved by appropriate 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 documented permission of the client or the client's legal guardian.

(10) Any content not approved by Communications office.

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

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

(1) Department employees should always maintain an honest, respectful, and professional demeanor in their communications, understanding they are the face of the Department when posting on Department or personal social media accounts.

(2) Department employees should effectively interact by responding promptly to posted comments or questions.

(3) Department employees should always check the factual accuracy of the material they are posting and receive appropriate approval from their supervisor regarding the material before posting.

(4) Department employees should post only relevant information and avoid posting information that is off topic.

(5) Department employees should pause and think before posting material or comments. If the material or comments give pause, employees should confer with their supervisor before proceeding.

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

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

(8) Department employees should not share passwords for access to social media accounts unless written approval for an exception to Department policy is first obtained.

(9) Department social media account passwords should be changed immediately when Department social media staff change positions or separate from the Department.

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

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

(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 on a personal account. 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 client and Department confidentiality may have been breached. 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 DCF program areas, including Office of Economic Self Sufficiency, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, 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 opinion as a private citizen and do not necessarily represent the Department's position. Be aware of any Chapter 119, F.S., requirements your actions may require you to conform to.

#### 8. Complying With Public Records Law and State Records Retention Requirements.

a. Record Retention. All accounts must be maintained in accordance with the Department of State's records retention rules and made available to the public in response to a public records request, as per Chapter 119, F.S., and in a manner consistent with PH Section 286.011, F.S., Pamphlet CFP, [15-7](#) Records Retention Schedules Used by the DCF, and as per the guidance of the Department's Records Management Liaison Officer, as needed.

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.

#### 9. Disclaimer.

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 sites, that may be reached through links on our page.

b. Comments may be deleted from DCF social media accounts, with prior approval from the Department's Office of General Counsel, whether by a pre-approved process or on an ad hoc basis, 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 laws. 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.

c. 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.