

### **Preamble**

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by employees of Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region (EAF).

For the purpose of this policy, social media means any resource for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to, blogs, wikis and social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and compliments any existing or future policies in regard to the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet as well as policies relating to confidentiality, privacy and standards of conduct.

### **Scope**

EAF employees are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. EAF employees are subject to this policy to the extent that they identify themselves as an EAF employee (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to EAF).

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

Employees may participate in social media in a personal capacity. It is expected that employees use of social media is done in a manner that is respectful and in compliance with this policy.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that EAF employees and volunteers must otherwise follow.

### **Policy**

#### **Social Media Guidelines:**

**1. Setting Up Social Media:**

All EAF social media accounts and their settings will be set up by the Communications Coordinator/designate. Permission to set up a social media account must be obtained from both the relevant Program Manager and the Executive director.

**2. Don't Tell Secrets:**

While it is acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialogue with others in the community, it is not acceptable to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, such things as unpublished details about EAF software, details of current and/or future organizational projects, financial information, research, information about the families and individuals that EAF serves, or information about any of its employees or volunteers.

**3. Protect Your Own Privacy:**

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the EAF website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Do not post information that you would not want the general public to see.

**4. Be Honest:**

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. EAF believes in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you

work for EAF. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty – or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. Also be smart/aware about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and be cautious about disclosing personal details.

**5. Respect Copyright Laws:**

It is critical that respect is shown for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealings of copyrighted materials owned by others, including EAF's own copyrights and brands. Never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, always attributing such work to the original author/source. It is a preferred practice to link to others' work rather than reproducing it.

**6. Respect Your Audience, EAF and Your Co-workers**

The public in general, EAF's employees and volunteers, those we serve and our funders and donors represent a diverse set of customs, values and perspectives. Do not say anything that contradicts or conflicts with EAF's values and principles or information on the EAF website. Please express yourself in a manner that is respectful. This includes not only those obvious things (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, profane or rude language, defamatory comments, personal insults etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory – such as information involving politics or religion. Use your best judgment. Ensure that the views and opinions that you are expressing are yours alone and do not represent the official views of EAF.

**7. Protect EAF Families/Individuals, Partners, Funders, Suppliers, Donors**

Families/individuals, partners, funders/donors and suppliers should not be cited or referenced without their prior approval. Never identify them by name without their permission and never discuss any confidential details related to them. It is acceptable to discuss general details about various projects, concerns, and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for families/individuals as long as the information provided does not violate any confidentiality policies that are in place.

**8. Controversial Issues**

If you come across misrepresentations made about EAF in the media please let your EAF supervisor or the Executive Director know. When speaking about others ensure that your remarks are factual and does not belittle the other party. Avoid arguments.

**9. Be the First to Respond to Your Own Mistakes**

If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it as soon as possible. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper, deal with it quickly – better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

**10. Think About Consequences**

Consider what might happen if an EAF employee or volunteer is in a meeting with a family/individual and they pull out a print-out of your blog and says, "This coordinator says that "This activity sucks."

Saying that, "This activity still needs some fine tuning" is fine; saying that it "sucks" is risky, not subtle and completely unprofessional. Use your best judgment. Using your blog to speak negatively about a fellow employee or volunteer, someone EAF serves, or a co-worker is dangerous and can result in legal action against you and the organization.

### **11. Disclaimers**

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they are not speaking officially. This good practice is encouraged, however it does not protect you from legal implications should the comments be incorrect or inflammatory.

Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer saying that, while you work for EAF anything that you publish is your personal opinion and not necessarily the opinion of EAF.

### **12. Don't Forget Your Day Job**

Ensure that the work time spent on social media is well used for such things as research, connecting with families/individuals we serve or workers or other professionals in relevant fields. .

### **13. Social Media Tips**

- The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring, if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about.
- Quality matters. Use the spell checker. Make sure your blog look is presentable.
- Take the time to edit your blog or social media entries prior to posting.

### **Speaking on Behalf of the Organization, Reporting and Monitoring**

The Executive Director/designate will act as the spokesperson and use social media to speak on behalf of the organization. All media inquiries should be directed to the Executive Director/designate.

All posting done on EAF social media accounts are the property of the organization. The Communications Coordinator is responsible for monitoring social media for the organization and will inform his/her immediate supervisor of any inappropriate use of social media.

Monitoring and reporting in regard to Facebook, blogs for specific programs, etc. ( i.e. FamilyHome) will be the responsibility of the relevant Program Manager/designate.

Monitoring and usage rules, which also are present in the organization's Internet Use, Confidentiality and Privacy policies, will apply to all social media activities.

### **Policy Enforcement**

EAF reserves the right to take action for non-observance of this policy, up to and including dismissal for cause.

As well, EAF may also request that individuals withdraw certain posts from social media accounts or sites, regardless of whether the post appears on a personal or EAF related social media account or site.

### **Acknowledgement and Acceptance**

All employees will be required to sign and date the policy to confirm that they have reviewed and understand the terms and conditions of the policy.

<http://www.socialmediapolicytemplates.com/sample-social-media-policies/sample>