# Attachment 1: Social media use procedure

Early Learning Victoria (ELV) recognises that social media is a popular and powerful online tool for communication. It is a great way to build relationships and engage with local families and communities.

The procedures and directives described here are essential to the safety and wellbeing of staff, children and their families. They also ensure that ELV operates in a professional and appropriate manner when using social media and information-sharing platforms.

## Procedures

ELV will have official social media accounts. These will be managed by ELV central office and the Department of Education. There will not be any social media accounts for individual centres.

ELV specifically requires that, unless written permission has been given, ELV staff do not:

* post photos, videos or personal details online of other ELV staff, children or families
* post photos or videos of ELV staff, children or families on personal social media accounts, or otherwise share photos or videos of staff, children or families through social media
* create an ELV-branded social media account, or other pages or content on social media that represent ELV, its staff, children or families, without written authorisation from a director at ELV central office
* post anything that could embarrass or damage the reputation of ELV, the Department of Education, colleagues, children or families.

Staff must exercise extreme caution using ICT facilities when accessing social media and/or information-sharing platforms, whether in the workplace or relating to external events or functions involving ELV.

It is a breach of confidentiality and privacy to make posts or comments about children, families, staff or management from ELV on social media sites without consent or authorisation. It may also be an offence under current legislation to record or use an image of a child, including transmitting the image on the internet, without the written consent of the child’s parent or guardian.

Staff must not:

* post or respond to material that is, or might be construed as, offensive, obscene, fraudulent, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, a copyright infringement, a contempt of court, a breach of a court suppression order, or otherwise unlawful or inaccurate
* make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to ELV’s reputation or bring it into disrepute
* imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of ELV, or give the impression that the views expressed are those of ELV, unless authorised to do so (note that ELV staff may share posts from an official ELV social media account)
* use an ELV email address or any ELV logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of personal comments
* use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor or other member of ELV
* use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in their capacity as an employee or contractor of ELV
* access or post on personal social media during paid work hours.

### Personal use of social media

When using social media, employees should remember they are bound by the [VPS Code of Conduct](https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/html-resources/guidance-for-the-use-of-social-media-in-the-victorian-public-sector/) and that registered early childhood teachers are also bound by the [Victorian Institute of Teaching Profession’s Code of Conduct](https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/maintain/conduct/codes).

There are also principles and legislative requirements that must be adhered to under [Victorian Government communication requirements](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-communication-requirements).

In addition, employees are governed by the [Acceptable Use Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/ict-acceptable-use/overview) for the department’s ICT resources.

ELV recognises that staff may choose to use social media in their personal capacity. This policy is not intended to discourage nor unduly limit staff using social media or taking part in other online activities in their personal life.

However, staff should be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to ELV from their use of social media, even if their activity takes place outside working hours or on devices not owned by ELV.

If a person can be identified as an employee of ELV on social media, they must:

* only disclose and discuss publicly available information
* ensure that all content published is accurate, not misleading and complies with all relevant policies of ELV
* expressly state on all posts that identify them as an employee of ELV that the stated views are their own and not those of ELV or the Department of Education
* be polite and respectful to everyone they interact with
* adhere to the terms of use of the relevant social media platform or website
* abide by privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment, copyright and other applicable laws
* understand that abusive, harassing, threatening or defamatory posts that are in breach of ELV policies may result in disciplinary action, even if such comments are made using private social networks outside working hours
* notify the approved provider or nominated supervisor if they become aware of unacceptable use of social media as described above.

### Consequences of unacceptable use of social media

ELV will review any alleged breach of this policy on a case-by-case basis. If the alleged breach is of a serious nature, the person shall be given an opportunity to be heard.

If the alleged breach is clearly established, it may be treated as grounds for dismissal. In all other cases, the person may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *ELV Staff Code of Conduct Policy.*

ELV may request that any information on a social media platform in breach of this policy be deleted. It may also restrict an employee’s access to social media on ELV ICT resources if found to have breached this policy, or while ELV investigates whether they have breached this policy.

Source: ELV Families and Community Communications Policy