



## Social Media Guideline September 2018

**Introduction:** The purpose of the social media guideline is to help Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists understand their professional boundaries and responsibilities in the appropriate use of electronic communication and social media. As professionals we have the responsibility to maintain public trust and safety, maintain appropriate professional relationships, and maintain security and confidentiality in our use of social media. This guideline applies to both private and professional communication through social media.

This guideline encompasses the use of social media and other messaging forms that enable users to interact, create, share, and communicate information online. Examples include messaging, photo and video chat software, websites, apps, email, texting, blogging as well as networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Regulated Members shall abide by the following guidelines:

- 1) Professionalism:
  - a. Communicate in a responsible and courteous manner maintaining professional boundaries during online or email conversations
  - b. Ensure any posts, even personal, do not jeopardize the public's view of you as a professional or your profession as a whole.
  - c. When posting information for the general public about your field, treatment information, resources, etc. ensure the information is accurate and evidence based
  - d. Avoid direct/indirect endorsement of any specific service provider, company/agency or products (e.g., 'liking' a colleagues professional Facebook page or a specific product manufacturer)
  - e. Adhere to any guidelines already in place for social media use by your employer
- 2) Advice/Treatment:
  - a. Do not dispense treatment advice over social media. Clinical advice is to be provided only after consent has been received and a thorough assessment has been completed. Recommendations can be provided over email if consent for that form of communication is provided.
- 3) Consent
  - a. Obtain consent prior to the use of email communication with others using an unsecured network
- 4) Confidentiality:

- a. Maintain and respect the confidentiality and privacy of all client information by not using personal health information, including images, in any unsecured electronic communication platform.
- 5) Collaboration:
  - a. Maintain and respect the confidentiality and privacy of all client information when collaborating online with other professionals.
  - b. Complete own research and use clinical judgment when determining a course of treatment after collaborating online with other professionals
- 6) Advertising:
  - a. Follow CSASK's Advertising Guidelines when advertising online
- 7) Conflict of Interest
  - a. Do not initiate contact or enter into personal relationships through social media (e.g., 'Facebook friends') with anyone who currently is or may be your client as this would be a conflict of interest
- 8) Legislation:
  - a. Comply with all applicable legislation, regulatory requirements, and standards of practice in these communications
- 9) Reporting:
  - a. Duty to report any inappropriate use of social media to CSASK

This guideline was created based on:

- 1) The Ontario College of Teachers (2011) Professional Advisory Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media. Available at <https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/Advisory%20Social%20Media/ProfAdvSocMediaENPRINT.pdf>
- 2) The Canadian Physiotherapy Association – Social Media Guidelines for Physiotherapists. Available at <https://physiotherapy.ca/social-media-guidelines>
- 3) The Canadian Medical Association (2011) Social Media and Canadian Physicians: Issues and Rules of engagement. Available at [https://www.cma.ca/Assets/assets-library/document/en/advocacy/CMA\\_Policy\\_Social\\_Media\\_Canadian\\_Physicians\\_Rules\\_Engagement\\_PD12-03-e.pdf](https://www.cma.ca/Assets/assets-library/document/en/advocacy/CMA_Policy_Social_Media_Canadian_Physicians_Rules_Engagement_PD12-03-e.pdf)
- 4) ASHA – Social Media Etiquette for Professionals. Available at <https://www.asha.org/associates/Social-Media-Etiquette-for-Professionals/>
- 5) CASLPO (2011) Practicing in the age of social media. Available at [http://www.caslpo.com/sites/default/uploads/files/PA\\_EN\\_Social\\_Media.pdf](http://www.caslpo.com/sites/default/uploads/files/PA_EN_Social_Media.pdf)