

Carleton University School of Social Work Statement on Social Media

Preface

The rapidly changing world of on-line communications (facebook, wikis, twitter, etc) has outstripped our ability to understand the impact that these forms of communication can have on us and the world around us. As professional social workers increasingly use social media we need to establish guidelines that protect us and those with whom we work from potential negative consequences. This document sets out guidelines for responsible use of these media consistent with the CASW Code of Ethics.

The current CASWE Accreditation Statement reads as follows:

“Schools shall have policies requiring that performance of professional responsibilities of social work students be in accordance with the relevant code of ethics, with particular emphasis on professional responsibilities toward vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.”

The **CASW Code of Ethics** outlines the core social work values as:

- *Respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons*
- *Pursuit of social justice*
- *Service to humanity*
- *Integrity of professional practice*
- *Confidentiality of professional practice*
- *Competence of professional practice*

School of Social Work Social Media Policy

The School of Social Work values both academic freedom and freedom of inquiry and affirms these as pillars of a university education whether expressed in oral communication, print, or electronically. The School recognizes the growing importance of electronic communication and is committed to supporting the right of social workers to interact knowledgeably and socially in the social media.

Members of the Social Work community are responsible and accountable for their actions and statements. The guidelines for use of social media outlined in this document have been designed to help students and faculty make appropriate professional decisions about classroom etiquette as well as the content of blogs, personal web sites, and postings on wikis, twitter and other interactive sites.

Guidelines for communication about the School and the practicum

The content of publically accessible electronic communications should adhere to the values outlined in the [CASW Code of Ethics](#). The School values and encourages freedom of expression and critical debate. The School does not encourage or support the use of inflammatory, libellous or disrespectful language. Further harassment or behaviour that creates a hostile work environment is unacceptable. Under the Ontario Health and Safety Act, specifically Bill 168 Harassment or violence can result in disciplinary action up to and including school/practicum termination. Please see [Carleton's Human Rights Policy](#).

The School encourages writing that is accurate and based on reasoned engagement with professional and scholarly knowledge. Postings should be treated as public documents recognizing that they could

be seen by anyone. Appropriate professionalism in public postings is essential. Web interaction can result in members of the public forming opinions about the School, the practicum settings and /or their employees or clients, and the author of the posting.

Web sites, blogs, tweets and other uses of social media that mention the School of Social Work, the practicum, their employees, or client groups must identify that the views expressed are those of the writer and are not the views of the School of Social Work, the faculty and employees of the School and/or the practicum setting.

At no time can identifying references be made to clients. Confidentiality must be strictly observed as outlined on page 7 of the [CASW Code of Ethics](#). Violations of the professional code of ethics are treated extremely seriously by the School of Social Work.

Use of Computer Technologies in the School

Use of computer technologies (laptops, netbooks, smart phones) in the classroom is encouraged if it augments academic learning. Receipt and response to text and voice electronic communication in the classroom should be restricted to family and work emergencies and not used for social purposes.

The production of recordings of classroom interactions is expressly prohibited unless authorized and approved by the instructor and by all class participants. The use of such recordings is subject to guidelines for ethical professional use. Unauthorized web posting of such recordings constitutes a serious violation of members' privacy and confidentiality rights.

Unless given permission by the School of Social Work or the practicum supervisor, students are not authorized to speak on behalf of the School or their practicum agency. Moreover, students should not give the impression that they can speak on behalf of the School of Social Work or the practicum agency. Students must not share information that is explicitly confidential about the School or confidential information about their practicum setting, clients, colleagues or other students.