

**POL 0062****Social Media Policy**

(including Easy Read Version)

Responsibilities and Delegations

The Policy Applies To	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director Services Directors Program Managers / Program Developers / Assistant Program Managers Support Workers Administration Participants
Specific Responsibilities	Committee of Management Assistant Executive Director Executive Director Services Directors Program Managers / Program Developers / Assistant Program Managers Support Workers Administration Participants
Policy Approval	Committee of Management (Aurora Support Services)

Policy Context – this policy relates to:

Standards	NDIS Practice Standards Core Module 2, Governance and Operational Management - Risk Management (Risk Management)
Legislation	Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Anti Discrimination Act 1991 National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
Contractual Obligations	NDIS Terms of Business Aurora Support Services Individual Participant Agreements Continuity of Support Program Funding Agreement Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning Crown Land
Organisational Related Policies / Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace Behaviour - Bullying and Harassment (including Sexual and Occupational Violence) Compliments and Complaints Management Policy Code of Conduct – general Maintaining an Environment Free from Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Mobile Phone and Tablets Policy Mobile Phone Policy (Easy English)
Organisational Related Forms / Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining an Environment Free from Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination

**POL 0062****Social Media Policy**
(including Easy Read Version)**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and participants of Aurora Support Services with clear expectations and guidelines regarding the use of social media and other communication means.

Social media has become one of the main ways in which people interact, but it presents a range of opportunities as well as challenges for communication.

Social media is a great tool for connecting people and gives people a quick, convenient and effective way to share experiences, opinions and information. Many aspects of social media are a public forum, and thus staff members need to be mindful of how their actions in such a forum may represent or reflect on the organisation. The pervasive nature of social media in our lives can also make it challenging for people to 'switch off' from being connected to others, and to enforce healthy boundaries between work and home.

Aurora Support Services is committed to upholding a *Zero Tolerance* approach to abuse.

It is important for all staff (including volunteers, contractors and members of the Committee of Management), participants, family members and other supports, to be aware that any harassment, bullying, abuse or unwanted sexual behaviour towards Aurora Support Services' staff members, participants, family member or other people for whom Aurora may reasonably have responsibility for their wellbeing, communicated via social media will be actioned in the same manner as if they occurred in the workplace.

Procedures**Staff Members****Use of organisational communication methods**

Aurora Support Services have a number of 'official' means of facilitating communication, including but not limited to:

- All staff members of Aurora Support Services have an organisational ...@aurorasupportservices.org.au email address.
- Some staff members have an organisational phone.
- Some supports (eg. R&R and transport supports) have an allocated organisational phone, which the staff members allocated to the support have access to.
- Aurora Support Services have official social media accounts (Facebook) or logins to other information-sharing websites (eg. Seek).

All communication using official Aurora Support Services communication must comply with the organisation's Code of Conduct and uphold professional standards.

All Aurora Support Services' accounts (emails and logins), and organisational phones are the property of the organisation. As such, Aurora Support Services reserves the right to check records of communication, such as email histories, posts, text messages and call records, at any time.

**POL 0062****Social Media Policy**
(including Easy Read Version)

Staff members who are found to have engaged in inappropriate, unprofessional or disrespectful communication, or any communication which brings the organisation into disrepute, using official Aurora Support Services means of communication may be subject to disciplinary action.

Use of social media during work time

Participants deserve staff members' respect and full attention during their program time.

As per the *Mobile Phones and Tablets Policy*, staff members are required to put their personal phones away while supporting participants. Staff members being on their phone during participant time is disrespectful to participants, and also poses risks to participants due to the staff member's inattention. Should an incident or injury occur because a staff member was on their phone without an appropriate reason, the relevant staff member may be subject to disciplinary action.

Staff members are permitted to use social media where it is appropriate to do so for their program; where this is directly related to a program goal or activity, and where participants are included in the process.

Social media is not an appropriate reason for staff to use their phone during their time on shift.

Staff members are expected to exercise reasonable discretion when it comes to the use of their phones; anything that can reasonably wait until outside participant time must do so. It is appropriate and accepted for staff to use their phones to make work-related calls, for safety-related reasons (for example, checking the VicEmergency App on days of high fire danger), or for completing progress notes using Lumary.

Use of social media outside of work

Staff members must abide by Aurora Support Services' *Code of Conduct* and uphold professional standards in all posts and/or comments made in connection to an official organisational account. For example, when contributing to or sharing a post on the organisation's Facebook page, sharing Seek advertisements.

People have the right to engage in social media however they choose, outside of work. Staff members should, however, be aware that comments, posts and other social media contributions made using personal accounts and/or outside of work times may still warrant disciplinary action.

Staff members must not:

- Publicly comment, post, or share information about Aurora Support Services that is untrue or may bring the organisation into disrepute.
- Use social media to harass, bully or abuse any person with whom they have a relationship through Aurora Support Services.
- Share any private or confidential information obtained through their work with Aurora Support Services.
- Share photos of Aurora Support Services' participants on private social media accounts without explicit consent from the relevant person (with the exception of re-sharing content from an official Aurora Support Services page). Consent provided by participants to Aurora Support Services for the use of their image is for sharing via organisational accounts; this permission does not extend to staff members' personal accounts.

**POL 0062****Social Media Policy**

(including Easy Read Version)

Any concerns, grievances or complaints should be managed in accordance with the organisation's *Compliments and Complaints Management Policy*. Social media and out-of-work-hours communication are not the appropriate forum for this.

Staff members advising that they will not be attending work should adhere to the procedures outlined in the *Absenteeism Policy* and the *Leave Policy* to advise the relevant person that they will not be attending.

Social media and self-care

Given the pervasive nature of social media, it is important that staff members take steps to protect their own wellbeing. Connecting via social media can be a really positive experience, but also often means that work contacts have a means for contacting you that continues beyond work times.

Staff are encouraged to carefully consider their personal 'rules' for social media engagement. Connecting with other staff members, participants and their families is done on a 'do so at your own risk' basis, knowing that this does open up communication outside of work time.

Staff should consider who they wish to add or connect with. In particular, staff should consider that:

- Many of our participants need support to understand appropriate communication and boundaries, so are likely to send a large volume of messages, or may not understand more subtle or nuanced rules such as 'no work-related messages outside of work'.
- Family members or supporting people may contact whomever they have access to outside of hours; they may send messages to staff members out of hours rather than sending a work email, or instead leaving a message on Aurora's main phone line. People not employed at Aurora are not expected to have any knowledge of when staff members are off sick or on leave, so may send messages to staff on days off.
- Taking anything other than an "all or nothing" approach to adding participants/colleagues/work contacts on social media can be reasonably expected to warrant someone whose request to connect has been declined to ask why this was the case. Staff members must be prepared to answer this in a polite and respectful way.

Aurora Support Services asks that all stakeholders respect one another's right to choose not to engage with people from work in their personal time, but will otherwise not become involved in or moderate disputes related to who is connected to whom.

Aurora Support Services encourages all staff to maintain personal boundaries around maintaining a separation between their work and home life. In respect to social media use, this may include redirecting people to more appropriate channels (eg. asking someone to contact the Aurora Staffing Phone when they have messaged an absence), choosing not to respond to work-related messages outside of work hours, or muting/blocking/'unfriending' contacts.

Participants, Family Members and Other Supports

Participants are encouraged to follow the same guidelines as staff members, as per the *Mobile Phones and Tablets Policy*; Aurora Support Services encourages participants to put their mobile phones away when engaged in programs, to get the most out of their programs.

Controlled Document						Page 4 of 6
Document Code	POL 0062	Last Reviewed	28 February 2024	Review Date	28 February 2026	



POL 0062

Social Media Policy

(including Easy Read Version)

As for staff members, Aurora Support Services asks that participants and family members and other participant supports (eg. support workers, house staff, Support Coordinators, etc.), adhere to relevant policies and procedures.

In particular:

- Any concerns, grievances or complaints should be managed in accordance with the organisation's *Compliments and Complaints Management Policy*. Social media and out-of-work-hours communication are not the appropriate forum for this.
- Participants, families or supports advising of participants non-attendance, or other work-related matters should do so via appropriate organisational channels; emailing to the appropriate person's ...@aurorasupportservices email address, by phoning the relevant service during business hours for day services, or by contacting the mobile phone number provided for transport and R&R supports.

Photos taken within group settings may include participants or staff members who do not wish to have their image published to social media. Participants, family members and support staff must be mindful to obtain consent from any person included in photos to be shared to social media, and to support participants to do so where they may not understand what this means. If any person requests that their photo not be shared, this must be respected and adhered to.

As for staff members, participants, families and other supporting people are encouraged to exercise self-care on social media. Participants should think about who they wish to add and connect with. Participants should also understand and respect that many of their peers or staff members may be enforcing their own rules to not add work contacts on social media, or may choose to moderate their social media communications by muting/blocking/unfriending or by not responding to messages.

Any communication via social media that includes harassment, bullying or abuse towards Aurora Support Services' participants, staff members or other relevant people for whom Aurora Support Services may reasonably have a responsibility towards will be actioned accordingly. Aurora Support Services reserves the right to cease supporting participants or families who engage in harassment, bullying or abusive communications.

Continuous Improvement

The Services Director/s are responsible for reviewing and updating this policy on a two yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.

Controlled Document						Page 5 of 6
Document Code	POL 0062	Last Reviewed	28 February 2024	Review Date	28 February 2026	

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(including Easy Read Version)**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Websites or apps that help us to connect and share things are called **Social Media**.

Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp and texting are all types of social media.



Everyone at Aurora should treat each other with respect.



It is never OK to use social media to bully someone.

It is never OK to send mean or inappropriate messages to people you work with.



Staff and participants should put their phones away during programs.



If you have a complaint or are upset about something, you should talk to your staff about it during the day.



Ask people if it is OK before you post a photo of them.

If someone asks you to delete a post with their photo, you should delete it.



You don't have to add anyone who you don't want to. You don't have to reply to messages if you don't want to.

Some of your friends or your staff might not want to add their work friends on social media. They don't have to.