



MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

Policy Number:	09	Version:	4
Updated by:	Martin Binoj, Paul Taylor	Approved by Board:	1 November 2023
Reason of Review:	Two yearly review	Scheduled review date:	As per schedule

INTRODUCTION

Established in 2000, Mercy Works Limited (MWL) is the development arm of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

We work in partnership with vulnerable communities and local organisations domestically and in the Asia Pacific region. We work with the people of these communities and organisations to build capacity, dignity and self-reliance.

1. PURPOSE

All workers need to be aware of the appropriate boundaries and responsibilities when communicating or engaging in an online environment. This policy makes workers aware that there is a strong connection between their online activities and behaviours and that of MWL's activities and reputation. All workers should understand their words, images, social media accounts, posts and comments, whether made inside or outside the work environment, may be attributed to MWL or impact the reputation of MWL.

MWL is committed to ensuring that internal and external communication of both publications and commentary in the use of social networking communications, are responsible, respectful and lawful. It is important that MWL and its workers makes every effort to ensure the safety of producers and consumers of Social Media.

MWL have aligned this policy to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct Principles 6.2:

- Commitment 6.2.1 - Members' communications are accurate, respectful, and protect privacy and dignity
- Commitment 6.2.2 - Members have organisational requirements for the collection of information, images, and stories

It is also noted that the following ACFID Code of Conduct Principles support ethical communications:

- Quality Principle 1 - Rights, protection and inclusion
- Quality Principle 2 - Participation, empowerment & local ownership
- Quality Principle 4 - Quality and effectiveness
- Quality Principle 6 - Communication
- Quality Principle 7 - Governance
- Quality Principle 9 - People & Culture

Any exemption to this policy must be applied for in writing, for approval by the Executive Director. Any exemption granted by the Executive Director must be in writing.

2. SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to MWL workers in relation to their work with/for MWL.

The policy also applies to visitors to our programs, and contractors and consultants such as freelance writers, designers, multimedia producers, fundraising consultants, partner organisations and other external parties using our stories, images, name or logo.

Unless specified otherwise, this policy applies regardless of where or when workers post or communicate information online. It applies to posting and online activity at home, work or other locations, while on duty or off duty, and regardless of whether workers are using their own property or the property of MWL.

To meet the regulatory requirements, MWL has reasonable processes in place to ensure the procedures and tools for seeking consent meet ethical guidelines, are made available in the local languages of PNG and Timor Leste with all exceptions clearly explained.

3. DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Terms used in this policy are:

Social Media - means any application, service, website or tool that enables or supports online publication and commentary.

Social network - is a platform that is entirely driven by user-generated content. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings; in posting text, photos, video, links, and other information; and in level of interaction with other members. Examples (but not limited to): Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, Snap Chat and Flickr

Idea - is a thought or suggestion as to a possible course of action.

Information sharing - is the act of entities or people passing information from one to another, either intentionally or unintentionally. This can be done electronically or through systems and includes comments and posts in private and public social media or networking sites/applications.

Personal website - is a social network page, blog, or any Internet website/tool created by workers and volunteers primarily to share personal communication with friends and associates.

Workers - are defined as MWL Board Directors, committee members, employees, contractors and volunteers (defined as workers) in relation to their work with/for MWL.

4. APPLICATION

4.1 Commitment

MWL understands that its workers will participate in social networking sites, and create and maintain personal websites, including blogs. MWL respects worker's right to have an online social networking and personal internet presence, using their own devices and resources. In doing so, however, those covered by this policy need to be aware of appropriate boundaries and activities when communicating in the name of MWL in an online environment. Please also refer to MWL Policy on Acceptable Use of Communications Systems and Devices and MWL Code of Conduct Policy.

4.2 General Use of Social Media

Social media is a very powerful, far reaching and positive way for MWL to communicate and facilitates opportunities to engage with the wider Australian community. This form of communication enables

MWL to be more active in relationships as well as increasing the frequency and speed of engaging with the public.

4.3 Official Use of Social Media

Employees must not engage in, speak on behalf of MWL or open accounts on behalf of the organisation unless they have been explicitly authorised by MWL.

Employees who have been authorised by MWL to use or engage with online social media on behalf of MWL as part of their duties must conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of behaviour as set out in the organisation's policies.

The overriding principle is that all behaviour online should reflect the standard of appropriate behaviour which is expected in all person-to-person interaction. Such behaviour should at all times demonstrate a respect for the dignity of each person.

Only those authorised to speak on behalf of MWL should identify themselves and/or represent the view of MWL online. In addition, comments etc should be done using the formal MWL accounts, which clearly identifies the organisation, and also protects the individual.

Ensure any content (posts, comments etc.) is consistent with MWL policies. This applies to whether the worker is participating in social media inside or outside of working hours (unless specified otherwise), and whether using their own property or the property of MWL.

Conditions of publishing or commenting via Social Media:

- that the reputation, or interests of MWL are not brought into disrepute
- that no disparaging, discriminatory or harassing commentary is published
- that no person or organisation is defamed
- the collection of information, images and stories does not harm people or the environment
- that media authorisation processes apply in relation to making any kind of statement or comment on behalf of MWL
- that compliance is maintained with relevant legislation, including copyright, privacy and anti-discrimination legislation
- that information about MWL or our partners which is not in the public domain is not published.
- that workers endorsing MWL services and activities, must disclose their relationship with MWL (for example employee, volunteer etc.) and must ensure that endorsements do not contain representations that are deceptive or cannot be substantiated.

4.4 Social Media Sites

When workers use public sites such as X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc., whether for authorised MWL activities, or for personal use on their own devices/platform the following will apply:

4.4.1 Developing a Social Media Channel

Any individual working on behalf of MWL who wishes to use social networking as part of their professional duties should first seek the permission from MWL executive director.

4.4.2 Protection of One's Own Privacy

The private use of social networking sites by persons covered by this policy should be kept distinct from their professional use of such sites.

4.4.3 Respect for Audiences

Workers are not to publish or disclose information or comment on any matters that contradict or are in conflict with MWL website or its policies.

4.4.4 Communicate respectfully

Workers are expected to use social media in a way that is respectful towards MWL and all persons associated with MWL and its values. This includes not only matters that could be deemed discriminatory (for example those areas covered by Equal Employment Opportunity or Human Rights legislation and regulations) but also consideration of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

4.4.5 Respect Intellectual Property Laws

It is critical that workers show respect and adhere to the laws governing intellectual property. This includes MWL's own copyrights and branding. To avoid plagiarism, workers must always reference or attribute written work to the original author and source. If you are unsure of the potential intellectual property risk, please consult your manager and the executive director before publishing on social media.

4.4.6 Controversial Issues

If workers read misrepresentations, opinions or views online that are likely to negatively impact the reputation of MWL, they must bring them to the attention of the executive director; in doing so, they must do so respectfully, presenting the facts. If workers speak about others, they need to ensure the information is factual and that it does not disparage another person(s).

4.4.7 Use of photos and/or videos

Workers maintaining official MWL social networking sites should take particular care with the use of photographs or video. Permission should be sought from all individuals in photos or in videos before they are posted. Material that might embarrass or offend those pictured should at all times be avoided. Material should be removed at once if it is the subject of a complaint or if the posting of a particular item makes an individual uncomfortable. The collection of information, images and stories does not harm people or the environment.

5. BREACH

Should a worker fail to adhere to this policy, it will be considered a breach of the Social Networking Policy.

Proven or evidenced breaches to this Social Networking Policy can result in, but are not limited to, any one or more of the following:

- disciplinary action
- performance management
- dismissal
- notification to an external agency
- criminal charges.

6. AUTHORITY

This Policy is approved and reviewed by the Board.

7. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

Other organisational policies, legislation, and codes that should be read in conjunction with this policy and with MWL's ethical values principles include:

- Acceptable Use of Communications Systems and Devices Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Framework Policy
- Ethical Decision-Making Framework for Communications Policy

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- One to One Interactions with Children Policy
- Management of Concerns, Complaints and Commendations Policy
- Human Rights Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy

8. CONTACTS

Executive Director
 Mercy Works Ltd
 Level 3, 6 Victoria Road
 Parramatta NSW 2150
 0295641911
mercyworks@mercyworks.org.au

9. REVIEW

Review of this policy, related forms and resources will be undertaken every two years by the Executive Director and approved by the MWL Board.

10. REVISION/MODIFICATION HISTORY

Date	Version	Current Title	Summary of Changes	Approval Date	Commencement Date
26 November 2014	1	Social Media Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New 	26 November 2014	27 November 2014
28 August 2019	2	Social Media Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and updated 	28 August 2019	29 August 2019
16 June 2021	3	Social Networking Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of Policy name, • Review and update to all areas of the Policy 	16 June 2021	17 June 2021
10 October 2023	4	Social Networking Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardisation • Stylistic Changes • Minor Edits 	1 November 2023	1 November 2023

11. APPROVAL DATE/REVISION SCHEDULE

Approved by: Board, Mercy Works Limited

Date: 1 November 2023

To be Revised: November 2025

Board Chair Signature	<i>Joseph Bakar</i>
Date	13 November 2023