


Policy 1.15, Social Media

Procedure:	Procedure 1.15		
References:	42.52 RCW Ethics in Public Services Act, WAC 292-110-010 Use of State Resources Rule, DEL Policy 1.13 Web Site Content, DEL Policy 1.14 Web Site Links		
Applies to:	All Employees		
Contact:	Government and Community Relations Manager		
Original date of policy:	11/8/11		
Date reviewed:	12/8/11		
Effective date:	12/8/11	Review by:	As needed
Approved:			Director

**Purpose**

This policy gives Department of Early Learning (DEL) employees guidelines and direction for proper use of social media while at work and outside the workplace.

**Policy**

DEL views social media as an opportunity to enhance communication between parents, child care providers, early learning stakeholders and state government employees. Social media can help us achieve our agency strategic goals of building public awareness and will to act; and strengthening dialogue with parents and caregivers. DEL employees must comply with existing state laws and regulations governing the use of state equipment and resources when using social media.

**DEL-sponsored Social Media Accounts**

The DEL Communications Office is responsible for establishing and supervising all social media accounts for the agency, although participation and suggestions for content are encouraged for all employees. Individual employees may not establish a DEL-sponsored social media account unless there is compelling reason and approval from the Communications Manager.

Employees must become a Social Media Representative before contributing to DEL-sponsored social media accounts. Social Media Representatives are permitted to access and contribute to DEL-sponsored social media accounts during paid work hours and/or using state equipment.

Content posted to DEL-sponsored social media accounts cannot contain:

- vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language or personal attacks.

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- political statements, such as comments that endorse or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions.
- promotion or advertising of commercial services, entities, or products.
- confidential, proprietary or legally sensitive information about agency business and/or DEL employees.

DEL may monitor the use of all state resources, including computer hardware, software, mobile devices, the network, paid work time, and the use and content of all DEL-sponsored social media accounts and Web sites. Misuse of state resources may result in corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Social media is not intended to be used for official state business, including but not limited to policy decisions or items of legal and fiscal significance that have not previously released to the public.

Any comments or feedback posted on DEL-sponsored social media accounts from non-DEL employees must be on-topic only and must comply with this policy. Outside feedback does not constitute giving official notice to the agency. All such feedback will be directed to the appropriate DEL program staff.

### **Personal Social Media Accounts**

Employees are free to establish and maintain personal social media accounts and Web sites outside of paid work time, using personal, non-state-owned equipment, devices, and resources. Content posted on personal social media sites should never be attributed to, or appear to be endorsed by or to have originated from, DEL. Employees who choose to list their DEL affiliation on a personal social media site must apply same standards of professionalism as outlined in the state Ethics in Public Services Act.

State equipment and resources, including paid work time, must not be used to access personal social media accounts.

### **Definitions**

Social media Web-based technology that enables and facilitates communication and/or networking through the Internet and/or cellular networks. Some examples of social media are:

- Blogs, and micro-blogs such as Twitter
- Social networks, such as Facebook and MySpace
- Professional networks, such as LinkedIn
- Video sharing, such as YouTube and vlogs (video weblogs)
- Audio sharing, such as podcasts
- Photo sharing, such as Flickr and Photobucket

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- Social bookmarking, such as Digg and Delicious

Social Media Representative A DEL employee who has completed Communications Office-approved social media training and has been approved by the Communications Office to establish a social media account on behalf of the agency.

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Responsibilities for using DEL-sponsored social media sites:

The **Communications Team** is responsible for:

- Consulting with DEL IT in entering contracts with and maintaining DEL-sponsored accounts on social media sites
- establishing and maintaining all DEL-sponsored social media accounts in accordance with the Communications project plan.
- providing content or approving content for all DEL-sponsored social media web sites
- on membership sites, accepting “friend” requests
- “defriending” a user if user violates DEL’s general use policy
- ensuring all approved DEL Social Media Representatives get proper training prior to contributing content for all DEL-sponsored social media sites
- providing social media communications training for DEL employees interested in becoming a social media representative. The training will cover professional conduct, online etiquette, copyright and trademark issues, and the protection of confidential and proprietary information.
- ensuring proper retention of records created or posted on Web-hosted services.

**DEL Information Technology** is responsible for:

- advising Communications team on maintenance of DEL-sponsored social media sites

**DEL Social Media Representatives** are responsible for:

- seeking the training and approval needed to become a social media representative.
- obtaining review and approval of content prior to posting
- stating their affiliation with DEL and their role with the agency.
- Conducting themselves in a respectful and professional manner at all times.
- Not sharing confidential, proprietary, and/or legally sensitive information about themselves, other employees or volunteers, or DEL.

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**Steps for becoming a DEL social media representative**

	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Step 1</b>	Employee:	Requests written authorization from Leadership Team member to become a DEL Social Media Representative. Request may be submitted by e-mail.
<b>Step 2</b>	Leadership Team member	Discusses request with DEL Communications Manager to grant or deny request.
<b>Step 3</b>	Communications Office	Maintains records of all approved DEL Social Media Representatives and all social media accounts established and sponsored by DEL.
<b>Step 4</b>	Human Resources	Maintains training records for employees who have completed the Communications Office-approved Social Media Training.

**Steps for posting content on a DEL-sponsored social media site**

	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Step 1</b>	Employee	Social media content is suggested using the Web Site Posting Routing Sheet and adhering to the approval process outlined in Procedure 1.13 A. Any links to external Web sites must comply with DEL Policy 1.14.
<b>Step 2</b>	Manager/supervisor	Approves
<b>Step 3</b>	Leadership Team member	Approves
<b>Step 4</b>	Deputy Director	Approves
<b>Step 5</b>	Communications Manager	Approves

The Communications Manager will consult with the Director as appropriate on any social media content that is questionable.