

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Policy 4.19 Use of Social Media	Effective: 6/23/26
Chapter 4: Human Resources	Page 1 of 6

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY

The Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Board) uses social media to improve accessibility and transparency and to foster positive relationships with key audiences such as people who receive services and their families, providers, social service partners, taxpayers/voters, government peers, and employees.

Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube give the agency a cost-effective means for communicating with these audiences. Platforms such as blogs and podcasts allow the agency to connect with people on a more personal and easily understandable level.

Social media plays an important part in the agency's overall communication strategies. It complements existing practices such as media relations, a speakers' bureau, newsletters, special events, and internal communications. To ensure effective use, guidelines have been set.

As an employee of the Board, employees have access to private and legally protected information. Employees must adhere to all applicable Board privacy and confidentiality policies when it comes to social media sites, including personal sites. The Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 5126.044 and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, prohibit disclosure of information about the individuals the Board supports. When applicable, these legal requirements are set forth in other Board policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide direction concerning employee's legal and ethical obligations when communicating through social media.

The Superintendent is authorized to establish and revise, as needed, the procedures to be utilized in the implementation of this policy.

Historical Resolution Information	Reviewer(s):								
<table><thead><tr><th>Date</th><th>Resolution Number</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>5/26/20</td><td>05-25-20</td></tr><tr><td>8/22/23</td><td>08-29-23</td></tr><tr><td>6/23/26</td><td>06-33-26</td></tr></tbody></table>	Date	Resolution Number	5/26/20	05-25-20	8/22/23	08-29-23	6/23/26	06-33-26	Superintendent Director of Human Resources Communications Manager
Date	Resolution Number								
5/26/20	05-25-20								
8/22/23	08-29-23								
6/23/26	06-33-26								

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Policy 4.19 Use of Social Media	Effective: 6/23/26
Chapter 4: Human Resources	Page 2 of 6

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

PROCEDURE

I. Social Media

Social media is defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible publishing techniques. Examples include but are not limited to: LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Blogs, web forums, and chat rooms are also included, as is email. No matter the method of communication, employees' confidentiality obligations must be observed at all times. Social media includes communicating through a computer, mobile phone, or other device to the general public or specifically to anyone who can access the social media site such as YouTube.

Anything contained in a social media format that is related to Board business, including a list of subscribers and actual posted communications, is a public record and is governed by the public records law.

II. Confidentiality of Individuals

The identity of individuals supported by the Board is confidential, as is their medical information. Employees are also prohibited from sharing information such as an individual's daily activities, moods, and other routine information including, but not limited to, pictures about individuals without the individual's consent. An employee's intent in posting information is not relevant. Once information and photos are posted, sent, or otherwise published, employees no longer have control of the content.

III. Respect Work Commitments

The SCBDD respects the right of privacy of its employees, but must have some rules restricting **off-duty** social networking, social media contact and similar communications. Employees' non-work activities are restricted as follows:

1. Private conduct should in no way compromise the carrying out of program/job related responsibilities.
2. An employee may not make inappropriate remarks or displays about an individual, groups of individuals, families of individuals, or persons or organizations which interact with those served by the Board.

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Policy 4.19 Use of Social Media	Effective: 6/23/26
Chapter 4: Human Resources	Page 3 of 6

3. An employee may not harass, in any manner, another employee; Board member; an individual served by the Board, a stakeholder representative or family; or others associated with the Stark County Board of DD by any social networking or social media activity or other means of communication, such as telephone or email.
4. An employee may not use any Stark County Board of DD logos, without proper authorization. (Contact the Communications Manager for clarification of this restriction.)

IV. Identifying Yourself

Unless specifically directed, an employee is not authorized to represent his or herself as a representative of the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Employees do not speak for the Board nor for the individuals it serves. However, the Board counts on employees to share its mission. If an employee chooses to identify his or her relationship with the Stark County Board of DD on any social media platform, the employee should use disclaimers when giving an opinion on a matter related to the Board. For example, "I am not speaking as a representative of the Stark County Board of DD" or "This is my opinion and is not necessarily the position of the Board on this matter." The best practice is to always use the first person perspective when discussing opinions, beliefs, desires and so forth.

V. Respectful Communications

The Board's relationships with the community, business partners, employees and individuals are extremely important. If employees have an issue or complaint, it must be handled through the appropriate chain of command, not aired on an employee's blog.

VI. Work Time

Unless directed otherwise, in writing, employees may not access, read, post or monitor social networking media while at work. This includes text messaging and emailing that is not part of an employee's job duties.

VII. Ask Questions

Whenever an employee has a question about sharing information with others about the Board, the individuals served by the Board, or any other topic that might be prohibited by the Social Media Policy and Procedure, he/she is required to ask their supervisor, director, or the superintendent.

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Policy 4.19 Use of Social Media	Effective: 6/23/26
Chapter 4: Human Resources	Page 4 of 6

VIII. Disclose

Employees who have published something that should not be published should report it to his/her supervisor. The goal is to correct any problem that might exist.

IX. Discipline

Violations of the Social Media Policy and Procedure shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

X. Board Social Media Sites

1. All official Board presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the Board's information networks and are governed by the Social Media Policy and Procedure.
2. The Communications Department staff will be responsible for monitoring content on each of the social media sites to ensure adherence to this policy for appropriate use, message, and branding consistent with the mission of the Board. This staff retains the authority to remove information.
3. If a sub-group of Board employees (based on facility, activity or other interest) seeks to establish a social media site, with respect to their activities as Board employees, it must be managed by the superintendent or his/her designee.
4. To maintain consistency, only authorized employees are permitted to post information on the Board's social media websites. Employees representing the Board via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Board. Employees who fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to disciplinary action.
5. Access to social media networks from within the Board's Information Technology (IT) infrastructure is limited to individuals performing official Board business. IT will be responsible for all technical and security issues.
6. The Communications Department, or appointed designee, will closely monitor social media. They will view social networking pages at least once each weekday and periodically check weekends.

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Policy 4.19 Use of Social Media	Effective: 6/23/26
Chapter 4: Human Resources	Page 5 of 6

XI. Standard Practices

1. Only content related to Board programs and services will be broadcast via the Board's social media channels. Examples include:
 - a. Announcements of upcoming events, such as awareness displays and workshops
 - b. Media releases
 - c. Links to videos explaining agency programs
 - d. Public service messages relating to topics about various developmental disabilities, such as autism, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy
2. All Board social media presences will have a consistent look and feel, including use of the agency's logo.
3. A limited number of designated staff in the agency will serve as administrators for the Board's social media sites and will be responsible for posting content. Board sites must have a minimum of two administrators.
4. All applicable employees will be trained in the use of social media tools to ensure consistency and prevent interruption during employees' leaves and vacancies. Should an administrator leave, passwords will be changed.
5. All Board social media sites shall comply with all appropriate Board policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
 - a. Confidentiality of Information for Individuals
 - b. Corrective Action for Employees
 - c. Information Systems Computer Use
 - d. Code of Conduct
6. This statement of our comments policy will be added to the Board's social media sites:

"We welcome you and your comments. The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest pertaining to the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments, and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum. We expect comments to be done in a respectful manner.

Once posted, Stark County Board of DD reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage anyone on the basis of ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. Repeated violations of this comment policy may cause the author to be blocked from the site.

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Policy 4.19 Use of Social Media	Effective: 6/23/26
Chapter 4: Human Resources	Page 6 of 6

Further, Stark County Board of DD also reserves the right to delete comments that:

1. Are spam or include links to other sites
2. Are clearly off topic
3. Advocate illegal activity
4. Promote particular services, products, or political organizations
5. Infringe on copyrights or trademarks
6. Use personally identifiable medical information
7. Contain confidential information

DISCLAIMER:

Please note that the comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Stark County Board of DD, its board or its employees. Products, businesses, links and information shared here are not necessarily endorsed by the Stark County Board of DD. Information posted on this site should not be considered medical advice and should not replace a consultation with a healthcare professional.

By submitting content to this site, you acknowledge that this information is available to the public. Please note that other participants may use your posted information beyond the control of Stark County Board of DD. If you do not wish to have the information you have made available via this site used, published, copied and/or reprinted, please do not post on this page.

If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact the Communications Department at SCBDD.”