



Sample Social Media Policy

Best Practice Resources – Program Operations

Please refer to your governing board and/or legal counsel for support interpreting your organization's social media policy. This sample document can be modified to fit the context of your specific mentoring program.

Social Media Policy

(Insert name of mentoring program) recognizes many benefits of online communication platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. We believe that these information sharing tools can help us raise awareness about our organization and the importance of quality mentoring relationships. For these reasons *(insert name of mentoring program)* utilizes platforms including social networking sites (*Facebook, Twitter, etc.*), news sharing sites (*program and community blogs*), photo and video sharing sites (*Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, etc.*), and other online communication platforms (*Webinars, podcasts, etc.*) to communicate with our program participants, board members, community partners, and others.

While we recognize the inherent benefits of online communication platforms, we also understand that online communication can have negative, damaging or unintended effects when boundaries of public and private information sharing are blurred. For these reasons we have developed a social media policy to protect program participants and organizational integrity. This policy has been adapted from the Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute to fit the needs of this program.

Our program will rely on social media tools for marketing, outreach, event planning and networking; however, if a program board member, employee, volunteer, youth participant or affiliate selects to participate in social media platforms on their personal time, we hold that this is the choice and sole responsibility of the individual. *(Insert name of mentoring program)* does not intend to control online interaction among program participants; however, to protect the healthy boundaries of youth and adult mentoring relationships, we request that participants, affiliates, and employees understand and adhere to the following Social Media CARE guidelines when interacting with the program or program participants through online communication platforms.

Community – Appropriate – Responsibility – Exercise Common Sense (CARE)

Community –Honor it!

Online communication platforms are an incredible resource for connecting and building community. Honoring community connection means using these mediums as ways to build support, positive interaction and shared understanding. Because people bring unique experiences, attitudes, and beliefs to the realm of online interaction just as they do in-person, some online dialogue may illustrate differences of opinion. When this happens, remember to articulate yourself clearly and responsibly by presenting information logically, not overreacting, and objectively clarifying misunderstandings or errors as necessary.

Appropriate – Be it!

If you choose to dialogue via an online communication platform on a personal level while “linked” or connected to your formal mentoring program and/or respective match mate, be considerate, fair, and appropriate with your posts. This means considering if the information you are sharing is something that you feel comfortable with your program, match-mate, potential employer and other individuals viewing BEFORE you post. Remember all information shared through online communication platforms becomes public domain the instant it is posted.

Responsibility – Use it!

You are responsible for the information you share through online communication platforms. Exercise responsibility for your communication by demonstrating, accuracy, honesty and integrity. When you make a mistake, acknowledge and correct it immediately. Think twice before posting. Always consider if you are comfortable with the information being connected back to you by anyone. Honor confidentiality and do not disclose an individual’s personal information. If you are expressing your personal opinion while referencing your mentoring program or respective match mate, be sure to indicate that you are expressing a personal belief, opinion, or attitude and not the expressed opinion of the organization, or individual with which you are affiliated.

Exercise Common Sense and Good Judgment –Show it!

If you’re unsure if you should post information using online communication platforms, err on the side of caution and use discretion. Understand that if you choose to connect with your program and respective match mate via online communication platforms, you are expected to share this information with the program. Recognize that *(insert name of mentoring program)* will monitor social networking sites to protect program participants and organizational integrity. Failure to follow the program’s Social Media CARE guidelines may be cause for dismissal from the program.

If a program participant, employee or affiliate is concerned about their ability to follow this social media policy and CARE guidelines, this program requires that they do not communicate electronically in a way that connects them to this program or another participant. This policy is established to protect participants, the integrity of this organization, and to support healthy youth and adult mentoring relationships. *(Insert name of mentoring program)* will select one staff member to manage and represent all program information via online communication platforms. This individual is responsible for managing all login information, marketing, and adherence to above guidelines.