School of Social Work

Policy on Social and Electronic Media and the Use of Electronic Devices

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CONTACT

School of Social Work

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1.0 Preamble

The Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) Standards for Accreditation, SB/M, 2.4.6, requires that the School of Social Work have a policy that covers the "ethical use of all forms of social media to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the academic unit and its field placement community" and that demonstrates "how the policy and procedures are consistent with the relevant human rights legislation, with the mission of CASWE, and with the mission of the academic unit concerned."

The Policy on Social and Electronic Media and the Use of Electronic Devices in the School of Social Work is consistent with the CASW Code of Ethics (2005), which outlines the core social work values as:

- Respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons
- Pursuit of social justice
- Service to humanity
- Integrity of professional practice
- Confidentiality of professional practice
- Competence of professional practice

The School of Social Work recognizes that the use of social media and electronic devices can enhance learning and knowledge sharing and support social justice goals. However, the widespread integration of social media into personal and professional life poses unique challenges and risks to professionals and service users. All social work students are responsible and accountable for their actions and statements. Students are expected to use social media, and electronic devices, in a manner that upholds the standards and ethics of the social work profession.

This policy applies to all St. Thomas University social work students i1.1 (an179 (n)-2.7)-6tT

2.2 Post "Post" refers to any user-generated information shared on a social media site. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook status updates, tweets, blog updates, etc.

2.3 Electronic Device: "Electronic device" refers to any computer or wireless device that provides communication by e-mail, telephone, text messaging, internet browsing, or is used for recording purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, cellphones, smartphones, tablets, smart pens, laptops, etc.

3.0 Social and Electronic Media Policy Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes the importance of the internet and is committed to supporting the rights of students to interact respectfully and knowledgeably through social media. The School strives to provide students with an environment of free inquiry and expression, wherein freedom of expression and academic freedom in electronic format has the same latitude as in printed or oral communication. The School requires students to demonstrate professionalism in all interactions; written, electronic and oral forms. Despite disclaimers, internet interactions and postings can result in the public forming opinions about the profession of social work, the School of Social Work, and St. Thomas University.

The use of any information without permission; confidential information; or unfounded, derogatory, or misrepresentative statements about the School of Social Work or its members (including students, staff, faculty, and guests), field practice, or field agencies or their members (including staff, volunteers, service users, and participants) on the internet may result in a review of the student's status under the Policy Governing Deferred, Denied, or Unsuccessful Field Placements in the School of Social Work (2014; rev. 2017) and/or the Policy Governing Professional Suitability in the School of Social Work (2014; rev. 2017).

4.0 General Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Social and Electronic Media

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance for social work students to:

- x interact respectfully and knowledgeably with people on the internet
- x respect copyright and intellectual property rights
- x make appropriate decisions about any online exchanges related to the School of Social Work and field agencies within the scope of the CASW Guidelines for Ethical Practice (2005) and the NBASW Standards for the use of Technology in Social Work Practice (2010), the St. Thomas University Policy on Non-Academic Misconduct (2015), and the Policy Governing Professional Suitability in the School of Social Work (2014; rev. 2017); and
- x protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the School of Social Work and its members and field agencies and their members.

If students are developing websites, social networking groups, or writing blogs that will mention the School of Social work or its members of field agencies or their members, students shall:

- x Identify that they are students and that the views expressed are their own and do not represent the views of the School of Social Work and/or field agencies.

- x Not speak on behalf of either the School of field agencies, unless given permission in writing by the School of Social Work or field instructor.
- x Inform the School of Social Work and/or f

environment, the School of Social Work has developed the following guidelines for the use of electronic devices in the classroom:

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Friending:
"I do not accept friend requests from current or former service users or participants on any social networking sites, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. I believe that adding service users or participants as friends can compromise confidentiality and blur the boundaries of our working relationship. If you have questions or concerns about this, I will be happy to talk more about this when we next meet."

Consequences:
Information shared on the internet is public and may be shared with unintended recipients. Such information may be used for pre-field practicum screening, pre-employment screening, evidence for disciplinary action, and grounds for legal action.

Complaints about MSW/BSW students using social media in an unsuitable, unethical, or