

Wright State University School of Nursing

TITLE: DIGITAL DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE: This purpose of this policy is to help the College of Nursing and Health (CoNH) maintain an environment that is conducive to learning and to protect patient privacy and the integrity of clinical and classroom experiences. This policy is subordinate to applicable laws.

DEFINITIONS: Social media is defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Examples include but are not limited to LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, and SnapChat.

PROCEDURES:

- Digital devices, other than those used for note-taking or accessing class-related information, are typically prohibited in classroom and clinical settings. Faculty members may modify this policy as course needs dictate. Specific agencies/hospitals may have different rules, which students must observe during clinical experiences.
- **Students should not communicate confidential, privileged, or proprietary information, particularly including information protected by HIPAA and FERPA. Distributing confidential, privileged, or proprietary information may be illegal and unethical, and may result in disenrollment from the College and referral to law enforcement / regulatory agencies.**
- **Comments or photographs that relate to clinical experiences may directly or inadvertently identify patients and/or patient medical information or other protected information. Students should avoid commenting about or posting photographs related to clinical experiences. Such comments or posts may also violate the College's and the student's contractual agreements with the clinical site, in which case the student may be removed and barred from the clinical site.**
- **Respect copyright and fair use:** Always consider copyright and intellectual property rights when utilizing social media sites. Adhere to all applicable laws and regulations.
- **Avoid Using Wright State University logos for endorsements:** The University logos (usually including CONH students in uniform where the CONH logo is visible) are protected by copyright and trademark law, and generally may not be used for personal or commercial purposes. Unauthorized use of the University's logos may be illegal, and may subject students to legal action. Further, such uses may violate the Code of Student Conduct.
- Students should obtain consent before creating and posting photographs, videos, or audio recordings of others. Faculty members have intellectual property rights in the content of their courses (including slides and handouts), and may restrict the right to photograph, film, or record audio during class, and to re-distribute in-class materials for non-academic purposes. Disregarding faculty instructions regarding in-class recordings may violate the Code of Student Conduct. It is almost always inappropriate, unprofessional, and unethical to create video or audio recordings during clinical experiences, as this frequently depicts or reveals confidential patient identities or information, and usually violates policies at the clinical site.
- **Terms of service:** Be mindful of the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.
- **"Friending":** WSU-CONH strongly discourages students from "friending" faculty and clinical agency personnel unless there is a genuine personal relationship that pre-dates the student/instructor or instructor/nurse relationship. Acts contrary to this policy can create the perception of impropriety or partiality.
- Students who obtain contact information for a patient or a patient's family for healthcare-related purposes must not use social media, texting, emailing, or other forms of communication with or about a patient or patient's family member for purposes not related to healthcare, or for any purposes other than fulfilling the student's assigned clinical responsibilities. Be mindful that "friending" patients may violate professional boundaries and/or confidentiality.

- **Think (and rethink) before sharing on a social media sites:** Privacy is very hard to maintain, and never guaranteed, when utilizing social media sites. Before posting anything, think about the consequences of what would happen in the event that it becomes widely known (for example printed in a newspaper, posted on a billboard, or “going viral” on the internet) and how that could impact both the student and the University. Search engines can retrieve posts years after they are created, and communications can be forwarded or copied. If the student posting would not speak the comment in class or to a member of the media, think about if it should be posted online. Remember that many employers now check social media histories of prospective employees, and may not respond favorably to a prospective employee who is indiscreet on social media.
- **Be respectful and professional:** Consider how a social media posting will reflect on the student, the University, and the CONH. Students should avoid posts that are obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to another person or entity, including patients, families, faculty, staff, fellow students, and agency personnel. Students are expected to adhere to professional standards including the ANA Code of Ethics. These types of communications, particularly those that amount to criminal harassment, sexual harassment, or threats, frequently lack legal protection, and may result in dismissal from the University or civil/criminal proceedings.
- **Identify personal views as personal:** If a student identifies him/herself as a Wright State University student online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution. For example: “The views expressed on this site are completely my own and do not represent the views or policies of WSU CONH or any of its affiliated clinical agencies.” Considering adding this language to the profile or “about me” section.
- **It is inappropriate and may violate class policy, CONH policy, and University policies/codes to access social media sites during clinical, laboratory, or class time. Using social media during clinical time is unprofessional, and may be reflected in the student’s clinical grades.**
- **Use social media names and URL’s that don’t identify WSU CONH:** Avoid using your WSU email address as your primary contact on social sites. Your social media avatar should not include WSU’s name or logo.
- **Avoid providing healthcare advice or provider referrals:** WSU CONH doesn’t endorse people, products, services, or organizations. If you give or request advice or referrals, clearly indicate that you are not doing so on behalf of WSU or the CONH.
- **Add value to the WSU community with what you post:** Be accurate and factual. If you make an error, post the correction immediately within the original post.
- Students who are aware of any violation of this policy must promptly report the violation to the Dean of the CONH. Failure to report may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- **Ethical Obligations.** The CONH will report social media and/or digital device usage that violates nursing ethics. Violations may result in revocation of a nurse’s registration or a State Board of Nursing’s refusal to grant registration.

Violations:

- **All complaints regarding possible violations of this policy will be investigated.** Consequences for failure to abide by any component of this policy may range from informal reprimand, to failure of a course, to dismissal from the program and referral to Code of Student Conduct or Office of General Counsel.
Privacy violations are especially serious: Violations involving protected health information (PHI) **will** result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. In addition, students may be subject to federal HIPAA fines or prosecutions from the affected individuals or clinical agencies.
- **Financial penalties:** Students may be required to reimburse WSU CONH if the university incurs legal costs related to an inappropriate social media posting.
- **Personal liability:** Defamation may prompt civil proceedings by the injured party, which may result in an award of money damages against the student, sometimes including punitive damages and attorney fees.
- **Additional consequences:** WSU-CONH may have mandatory reporting obligations to licensing and credentialing bodies.

Disclaimer: *WSU and the CONH are not responsible for postings on social media as referenced in the above policy.*

Rationale: While the use of cellular phones and other digital devices can provide educational benefit to students, their use must not disrupt the learning or patient care environment. In addition, the increasing use of these devices for accessing and posting information on social media sites must promote a professional image that does not violate policies related to protection of sensitive and confidential information.

RELATED POLICIES: Wright Way 2001; OBN Program Policy 4723-5-12; WSU Code of Conduct, HIPAA, FERPA; CoNH Testing Policy,

RESOURCES: ANA Code of Ethics, NCSBN White Paper: A Nurse's Guide to Use of Social Media, ANA Social Networking Principles Toolkit

APPROVED BY AND DATE: UG Curr, 05/14/12, 01/16/19; Revised Faculty Assembly, 08/27/14, 4/24/19

REVIEWED: Fall 2019

FOLDER: STUDENT

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Student Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

5.2022