UNC-CH School of Dentistry Policy for the Use of Social Media

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) School of Dentistry supports the use of social media platforms and tools as a method of communication with family, friends, colleagues, school alumni and friends. Social media is an exciting and fun way to stay in touch and, when used responsibly, we encourage both personal and professional use of these tools.

However, because these platforms are used for both personal and professional connections, the UNC School of Dentistry believes it to be important to distinguish proper use of these tools as a member of the UNC School of Dentistry community. This policy promotes appropriate use of social media tools while prohibiting actions which are illegal, unprofessional or in conflict with UNC School of Dentistry policies.

Scope

Current UNC School of Dentistry students, faculty, adjunct faculty, staff and volunteers/interns (collectively, the “UNC School of Dentistry Community”) are required to abide by this policy. The Social Media Policy applies to all social media platforms, multimedia, blogs and wikis which are used for personal and professional networking. Those platforms and tools include the most popular, those less popular and those platforms not in existence at the time this policy was developed. Examples of applicable social media platforms are below; please note this list is not all inclusive:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Tumblr
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Blogspot

This policy applies to the UNC School of Dentistry Community both during and outside of educational and work hours, and while using personal social media platform accounts with no professional correlation.

Authorization of New UNC School of Dentistry Social Media Channels/Pages/Accounts

The UNC School of Dentistry encourages student, staff, and faculty groups to promote their own activities via social media. However, prior to beginning a new group/UNC School of Dentistry structure on a social media outlet, notify the UNC School of Dentistry’s Director of Communications, Mrs. Tiffany Brannan, to avoid duplication between school entities, to authorize the use of logos/trademarks and ensure the new page is properly setup. She may be reached at 919.537.3260 or tiffany_brannan@unc.edu. If applicable, she will also assist you in registering the new social media presence with the UNC School of Dentistry and UNC.

Student, Applicant, Alumni, Employee and Patient Privacy

A. Student, Applicant and Alumni Privacy. Federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), University policies and North Carolina state laws concerning the confidentiality of student, applicant and alumni records apply without exception to social media. Any information, including but not limited to contact information, academic records, disciplinary records or email correspondence, should never be shared via social media or any other method without written approval from the appropriate party.

B. Employee Privacy. Without exception, current and former employee records or information should never be shared via social media. Examples of such records include disciplinary information, salary or leave information, and email correspondence. This information should only be shared with written approval from the appropriate party.
C. **Patient Privacy.** Use of social media by the UNC School of Dentistry Community must comply, without exception, with all UNC School of Dentistry and UNC policies and guidelines and state and federal laws regarding the confidentiality of patient information, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The UNC School of Dentistry Community should never release protected health information (PHI) on social media platforms without HIPAA-compliant written authorization from the patient or the patient's legal guardian. Any such PHI that is to be used for UNC School of Dentistry social media platforms or TV, radio or other media must only be done pursuant to a HIPAA compliant authorization for the specific use or disclosure. These authorizations cannot be combined with or into any other form.

**Under no circumstances should UNC School of Dentistry personnel disclose a patient's name, photograph/radiographs, personal information, health information or course of care or any other PHI on personal social media platforms.** For more information about HIPAA, visit [https://www.dentistry.unc.edu/experience/policies/hipaa/](https://www.dentistry.unc.edu/experience/policies/hipaa/).

**Personal Privacy**

It is each individual's responsibility to ensure he/she does not divulge too much personal information in any online forum or social media platform. Each member of the UNC School of Dentistry Community is encouraged to pay attention to his/her own privacy settings to protect him/herself.

**Protection of Research and Intellectual Property**

Do not release unpublished research or data, or unprotected intellectual property on any social media platform. Releasing this type of information is a violation of UNC and UNC School of Dentistry policy and is not permitted under any circumstances.

**Misrepresentation**

Under no circumstances should you portray yourself as acting on behalf of the UNC School of Dentistry or UNC unless you have been authorized to do so. When authorized to act on behalf of the UNC School of Dentistry or UNC, you may not portray your own opinions as those of the UNC School of Dentistry or UNC. When using social media for personal reasons, the UNC School of Dentistry Community is asked to ensure all personal opinions are clearly the opinion of the individual and not the UNC School of Dentistry or UNC.

Each member of the UNC School of Dentistry Community is encouraged to disclose his/her relationship with the UNC School of Dentistry, but to be mindful to represent his/her opinions as his/her own, not as the UNC School of Dentistry’s positions.

**General Guidelines**

Outside of this policy, there are general considerations the UNC School of Dentistry Community should take into account prior to engaging in the use of social media. A few of those considerations follow.

1. **The Internet is permanent and social media impacts your reputation.** Even if you delete something from a social media site, it can be recovered through site caches that are beyond UNC School of Dentistry control. Remember this as you post photos, opinions and other content.
2. **Be respectful and professional.** Many of us use social media for personal reasons, but it is inevitable that at some point, professional and personal will overlap. As such, we encourage everyone to be kind and professional at all times.
3. **Communicate clearly.** Always do your best to communicate your ideas transparently, without omissions or inaccuracies.

4. **When posting personal thoughts and opinions, do so from a personal account.** Maintaining some separation between personal and professional social media is ideal. Be sure you’re doing what you can to distinguish when you’re speaking for yourself and not for the UNC School of Dentistry.

5. **Do not allow social media to interfere with your work or education.**

6. **Be safe.** Always be cautious when posting personal information, vacation or trip plans, etc. on a social media platform.

7. **When in doubt, contact communications.** Social media is ever-evolving. If you have questions or concerns, contact Mrs. Tiffany Brannan at tiffany.brannan@unc.edu or 919.537.3260.