Social Media Best Practices at Boston Children’s Hospital

Our social media pages support and inspire patient families and staff. We encourage you to join and participate in our engaging communities. The Boston Children’s Hospital Social Media Policy and other helpful materials can be found at web2/socialmedia.

If you choose to use any social media channels, please keep the following in mind:

*Stay professional.*
- Maintain professional and personal boundaries
- Exercise professional judgment, mutual respect and integrity
- Never communicate with users in a way that is offensive, embarrassing or defamatory

*Follow the rules.*
- Abide by the employee code of conduct, policies and guidelines
- Obtain authorization from the Social Media Team if you wish to create any social media page affiliated with or sponsored by Boston Children’s Hospital

*Comply with HIPAA regulations.*
- Never share patient, family, or employee health and/or identifiable information and photos without written consent
- Don’t share confidential Boston Children’s Hospital information
- Never violate a patient or family’s privacy by initiating contact or accepting friend invitations to join private social media pages

*Engage with our content!*
- Share, like, love, retweet, repin and comment on our posts and videos
- Share our [Thriving, Vector](#) and [Notes](#) blogs
- Share our media [stories](#)

*Join our communities:*
ALL channels: [www.childrenshospital.org/patient-resources/connect-with-us](http://www.childrenshospital.org/patient-resources/connect-with-us)

- [www.facebook.com/BostonChildrensHospital](http://www.facebook.com/BostonChildrensHospital)
- [www.twitter.com/bostonchildrens](http://www.twitter.com/bostonchildrens)
- [www.youtube.com/ChildrensHospital](http://www.youtube.com/ChildrensHospital)
- [www.linkedin.com/company/bostonchildrenshospital](http://www.linkedin.com/company/bostonchildrenshospital)
- [www.instagram.com/bostonchildrens](http://www.instagram.com/bostonchildrens)
- [www.pinterest.com/BostonChildrens](http://www.pinterest.com/BostonChildrens)
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does Boston Children’s have a social media policy?
A: Yes, you can find it here: web2/socialmedia

Q: Should I engage with Boston Children’s social media channels?
A: We encourage employees to share, like, comment, retweet, etc our social media posts. Our pages and communities share inspirational and innovative stories about patients and staff at the hospital.

Q: Should I be on social media during work hours?
A: Social media should only be used during breaks and non-working hours. Usage of social media should not interfere with daily work responsibilities.

Q: What do I do if I receive a Facebook friend request from a patient or patient’s parent?
A: Accepting a patient/parent friend request is both a HIPAA and hospital policy violation, therefore you must decline. When you decline a friend request on Facebook, the person who sent the request will not get a notification. If you are asked why you declined, you can respond with: “Unfortunately, I cannot accept your friend request due to hospital policy and out of respect for your privacy.”

Q: What does it mean to be “professional” in my postings?
A: Present yourself as a professional employee of Boston Children’s. Anything you post is a representation of the hospital and your profession – be respectful in your posts and comments. Nothing is truly hidden or private on social media, so please keep this in mind. Ask yourself the following: “If my supervisor saw this, how would this post affect our relationship?” or, “If one of my patient’s parents saw this, how would it affect our relationship?”

Q: Should I disclose that I’m an employee of Boston Children’s on my public social media accounts?
A: Where your connection to BCH is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the hospital. Consider adding this disclaimer in an "About me" section of your blog or social media profile: “The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.”

Q: Can I post photos of patients on my personal social media page if the patient or patient family agrees?
A: No. You should not cross any professional boundaries by posting photos of patients or patient families on your personal social media pages, even if they have all privacy settings in place.

Q: Can I initiate social media contact with a patient once that patient has left and is no longer a patient?
A: No. Once someone is a patient, he or she is always a patient and you should maintain professional boundaries. You shouldn’t have a social media relationship with a patient unless you had a relationship with previously.

Q: How can I update my privacy settings?
A: The Social Media Privacy Settings document can be found at web2/socialmedia. This guide will help you make your personal social media pages as private as you would like them to be.

Q: Can my department have its own social media page?
A: The first step in process is to fill out the New Page Application form found at web2/socialmedia. Specific pages require a substantial amount of time, content and resources. Not all applications are approved.

Q: Who do I contact with further questions?
Senior Social Media Specialist, Lily Vautour: 617-919-3128 or Lillian.Vautour@childrens.harvard.edu
Social Media Specialist, Jess Laurendeau: 617-919-3114 or Jessica.Laurendeau@childrens.harvard.edu