

Policy Title	Media Policy: News Outlets and Social Media Platform
Policy Number:	ADM 3.04
Department:	SCHS
Functional Area:	Dean of Enrollment Management
Contributing Department	
Approved by:	RHEI Leadership Team
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Manual	To be entered by Compliance360 System administrators or N/A if not in C360
Section	ADM 3

I. Mission, Vision and Values

This policy reflects our commitment to human dignity, integrity, compassion, stewardship, and service by guiding decisions and actions that uphold respect for all individuals and promote excellence in our work.

This policy aligns with our mission of extending the compassionate ministry of Jesus by improving the health and well-being of our communities and providing good help to those in need, especially the poor, dying, and underserved by ensuring that our practices support ethical, effective, and accountable service across all areas of the organization.

II. Policy

Media Policy: News Outlets and Social Media Platforms

III. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS) students with expectations and requirements for participation in any media, including news outlets that include but are not limited to television, radio, print, online news sources and social media networks and platforms.

IV. Scope

This policy applies to all students of SCHS. Students must follow the Bon Secours Mercy Health (BSMH) Social Media Use Policy and the BSMH Public and Media Relations Guidelines.

In conjunction with the provisions of this Policy, students must follow the “Common Sense Guidelines.”

V. Policy Details

On-Call Public and Media Relations Guidelines

Students of SCHS under the parent company BSMH are expected to fully adhere to the Media Policy. BSMH's first responsibility is patient care, dignity and privacy. No student or associate should speak with a member of the media, on behalf of BSMH and any of its entities, without first having cleared it through the Public Relations (PR) department.

BSMH and all its entities consider patient and associate information to be confidential, consistent with federal HIPAA laws. Requests for information by news media (television, radio, print, online, etc.) about their hospitals, facilities, or medical group leadership and/or an appointed subject Matter Expert, to ensure the most appropriate spokesperson is identified to speak with media.

Contact information for the PR department can be found here:

<https://www.bonsecours.com/about-us/newsroom>.

Social Media Guidelines

Students of SCHS are expected to adhere to the following procedures when participating in any Social Media: (i) on College hosted sites; (ii) through SCHS equipment or networks; (iii) with respect to SCHS-related matters; and/or (iv) where a student's SCHS affiliation is somehow referenced, identified or can be logically assumed based upon the site context or information provided. This Policy applies to use of Social Media both during and outside of school hours to the extent that any of (i)-(iv), above are implicated.

The healthcare industry, like many other industries, embraces the use of Social Media (as defined below) to facilitate and enhance communication, education, collaboration, research, and remote work, etc. However, the use of Social Media carries with it significant risks, including, but not limited to, privacy risks. These risks are lessened through establishing and complying with certain safeguards, policies, and guidelines; providing education and training; and taking appropriate corrective action when necessary. The intent of this policy is not to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information or to interfere with students' legally protected rights, but to minimize risk to SCHS, students, and those we serve.

SCHS recognizes the value of online Social Media, when used properly, as resources to positively promote the organization's mission and values, strategic goals, marketing, referral, and recruitment activities as well as a forum for exchange of information by its students. In fact, SCHS recognizes that the best form of marketing often comes from students who share with their communities how the College is living the promise of providing Good Help every day. For example, a well-written post from a member of the community or student about a SCHS-related community event, new program or service, or the extraordinary care that students have provided to patients, residents, and families (without disclosing PHI, as defined below) can have far greater effect than a paid TV commercial.

Expectations***Use of Social Media***

Prior to engaging in discussions on Social Media sites, students should consider the following:

Does the discussion conflict with SCHS's mission, culture, code of conduct (Student Rights and Responsibilities), and/or values?

Does the discussion reveal confidential patient information, including any information that could directly (e.g., name, social Security number, address, etc.) or indirectly (e.g., provider name, date of birth, diagnosis, images, etc.) identify a patient under the care of the individual or organization?

Is the content an appropriate and professional reflection of a SCHS student?

Privacy and Security Compliance: All uses, and disclosures of patient Protected Health Information via Social Media sites are prohibited.

Respecting Copyright Laws: Students may not post content or conduct any activity that fails to conform to all applicable state and federal copyright and trademark laws. It is critical that students ensure that they have documented permission to use or reproduce any copyrighted text, photos, graphics, video, music, or other material owned by others. This applies to the use of SCHS trademarks, names, and logos.

In conjunction with the provisions of this Policy, students must follow the “Common Sense Guidelines.”

Common Sense Guidelines

- **Don’t assume Social Media posts are private:** Even though there are privacy controls on sites such as Facebook and other Social Media platforms, students should assume that anything posted on a web site is seen by the general public, as well as by SCHS. It is important to keep in mind that:
- **“Friends” can copy your posts and make them available in public.** Your friends may include patients/residents. It is easy for your privacy settings to be set to something other than what you had planned.
- **Don’t jeopardize your reputation and/or future employment opportunities:** Students must consider that everything they post online is part of a lifetime record of him or herself. Increasingly, employers search this online history.
- **Keep in mind potential implications from posting:** Recognize that student use of Social Media can result in members of the public forming opinions about SCHS and its services, employees, or students.
- **Comply with applicable law:** Students may not engage in any conduct that violates federal, state, or local law.
- **Use this Policy as a helpful resource:** Consult the policy, as necessary, prior to posting or engaging in activity that could amount to a violation.

Monitoring and Oversight

Corrective and/or Disciplinary Action for Violations:

Speaking to News Outlets without prior approval or the inappropriate use of Social Media by SCHS students is subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, consistent with SCHS policies and procedures. Though not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited

activities, SCHS notes the following activities that may be inappropriate and therefore prohibited for students:

- Being interviewed by or providing written information to a News Outlet about BSMH (print, website, TV/Radio, online etc.) without approval from the BSMH Public Relations department.
- Speaking “off the record” on behalf of the College or BSMH to News Outlets on any matter pertaining to the organization.
- Using Social Media in a way (e.g., posting information) that conflicts with or violates SCHS’ mission, values, code of conduct, or administrative policies and procedures.
- Posting or sharing any copyrighted or trademarked information or property where appropriate permission has not been granted or recorded, including trademarks, names and logos of BMH and/or SCHS.
- Compromising the privacy and security of confidential patient health or proprietary business information about BSMH, its affiliates, patients, vendors, or suppliers, including without limitation, business, and financial information. (Note that inappropriate use or disclosure of patient health information may also be subject to fines, legal proceedings and/or criminal charges in addition to any corrective and/or disciplinary actions taken by SCHS).
- Engaging in any form of harassment, including derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual’s race, religion, color, gender, age, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Posting or sharing material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, or abusive to another person or entity (including the College) that is not otherwise protected by law.

Rights of Southside College of Health Sciences

SCHS reserves the right to reject or remove comments for any reason at any time from SCHS Social Media sites, including, but not limited to, its belief that any comment violates this Policy, and to determine in its sole discretion which submissions meet its qualifications for posting.

In addition to other forms of disciplinary action, SCHS reserves the right to ban future posts from people who repeatedly violate this Policy.

SCHS reserves the right to amend these guidelines at its discretion to address issues or changes that may arise.

Acknowledgements

Aspects of this policy are based on BSMH Public and Media Relations Guidelines and the BSMH Social Media Use Policy and Guidelines.

VI. Definitions

Blog – Short for “web log,” a site that allows an individual or group of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with online audiences.

News Outlets – are broadcasting channels that provide news and information to the public. These channels can include print, TV, radio, internet, and social media platforms.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) – PII is any information that permits the identity of an individual to be directly or indirectly inferred, including any other information that is linked or linkable to that individual.

Protected Health Information (PHI) – PHI is individually identifiable information (including, but not limited to, names, dates, medical diagnosis, phone numbers, fax numbers, medical records numbers, and social security numbers) about a patient/resident’s physical or mental health status, the provision of health care to a patient/resident, or payment for that care.

Podcast – A collection of digital media files distributed over the internet, often using syndication feeds, for playback on portable media players and personal computers.

RSS feeds or Syndication feeds - A family of different formats used to publish updated content such as blog entries, news headlines or podcasts and “feed” this information to subscribers via email or by an RSS reader. This enables users to keep up with their favorite websites in an automated manner that is easier than checking them manually (RSS known as “really simple syndication”).

Social Media - Includes but are not limited to blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, online collaborative information, developing technologies, and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences (e.g., wikis, RSS feeds, video sharing, and any social media networks and platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter (X), Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok, etc.).

Wiki - Allows users to create, edit, and link webpages easily; often used to create collaborative websites (called “Wikis”) and to power community websites.

VII. Attachments

N/A

VIII. Related Policies and Procedures

ADM 3.05 Student Conduct – Rights and Responsibilities

IX. Regulatory Notices

Nothing in this policy creates a contractual relationship between Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS), a department owned and controlled by Bon Secours Mercy Health Petersburg, LLC (d/b/a Southside Medical Center), and any party. SCHS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to amend, terminate or discontinue this policy at any time, with or without advance notice.

X. Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Next Review Date	Description	Supersedes, if applicable	Prepared By
1.0	8/1/2021	N/A	Revised and New Template	N/A	Executive Council
1.1	8/1/2023	N/A	Revised and New Template	1.0	Dean of Student Affairs
1.2	8/1/2024	8/1/2027	Minor Revisions	1.1	Dean of Student Affairs
1	8/1/2024	8/1/2027	Version Changed – BSMH Template Adopted	1.1	Dean of Student Affairs

This policy/procedure/guideline is not intended to establish a standard of clinical or non-clinical care or practice. Rather, this policy/procedure/guideline creates a general tool to help guide decision-making with the understanding that different action(s) may be necessary in response to the totality of the circumstances presented.

Sites revised 05/06/2025- Bon Secours Mercy Health adopts the above policy, procedure, policy & procedure, guideline, manual / reference guide / instructions, or principle / standard / guidance document for all Bon Secours Mercy Health entities including, but not limited to, facilities doing business as Mercy Health – St. Vincent Medical Center, St. Vincent – St. Charles Hospital, St. Vincent – St. Anne Hospital, Mercy Health – Perrysburg Medical Center, Mercy Health – Tiffin Hospital, Mercy Health – Willard Hospital, Mercy Health – Defiance Hospital, Mercy Health Allen Hospital LLC, Mercy Health - Lorain Hospital, Mercy Health St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital, Mercy Health St. Joseph Warren Hospital, Mercy Health - St. Elizabeth Boardman Hospital, Mercy Health - St. Rita's Medical Center, Mercy Health – Springfield Regional Medical Center, Mercy Health - Urbana Hospital, Mercy Health - Anderson Hospital, Mercy Health - Clermont Hospital, Mercy Health – Fairfield Hospital, Mercy Health - West Hospital, The Jewish Hospital – Mercy Health, Mercy Health – Kings Mills Hospital, LLC, Mercy Health - Lourdes Hospital LLC, Mercy Health – Marcum and Wallace Hospital, Chesapeake Hospital Corporation DBA Rappahannock General, Maryview Hospital, Bon Secours Richmond Community, Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center, Bon Secours – St. Mary's Hospital, Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center, Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital, Bon Secours - Southside Medical Center, Bon Secours Mercy Health Franklin, LLC, Southern Virginia Medical Center, and Bon Secours Harbour View Medical Center. This also may apply to Bon Secours Mercy Health Medical Group LLC and its medical group affiliates.