



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Protocol for Social Media Usage to Contact Clients

Supplemental to DCS Policy: [7.2, Acceptable Use Network Rights and Obligations](#)

There are times when clients need to be contacted and do not have other means of communication other than Social Media access.

This will be a guide for the Regions to utilize Social Media sources when contacting clients and to assist staff with better diligent search efforts.

- No one is to use their personal account or a fake profile to contact clients.
- A social media account will be created by each region's directors or designee for the sole purpose of contacting clients with written approval from DCS Communications.
 - This will be via the Facebook application beginning in March 2023, however, if other regions choose to use other social media outlets at a later date, this can be permitted using the same guidelines.
 - The social media account will be separate from the main regional social media accounts to avoid conflicts with good news sharing, to help with better monitoring, and to ensure more individuals have access.
- Each account will have a designated Administrator in charge of the account, as well as a back-up designated Administrator. The designated Administrator and back-up Administrator will routinely monitor the account for inappropriate activity and all contacts. All Regional Directors will also be delegated social media Administrators.
- If the designated Administrator identifies inappropriate activity or communication, they will notify the Regional Director immediately.
- It will be up to the Regional Directors to determine which staff will have access. *Please note: the purpose of the social media account is so that staff has a diligent search tool to locate and contact clients.*

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Rules of Usage:

- No friends are to be added to this account nor will anyone make any changes to the account once created and approved.
- To avoid the account being accessed by a non-DCS-employed individual, the password will be changed once a month by the designated Administrator and shared with staff. No one except the designated Administrators will change the password and once changed, this will be shared with all authorized parties.
- If someone with access to the account leaves the Department in bad standing, the password will be changed after that individual's email access has been removed.
- When contacting clients, it is the responsibility of the person sending the information to give the worker's name and contact information. This will help with overall tracking as to who is communicating with which clients.
- Any contact via this account must be documented in case recordings.
 - Once communication has been completed, a copy of all conversational activity will be printed and uploaded into the documents section of the DCS electronic record system.
- If sending to an unconfirmed account (such as in diligent search situations where the picture profile can't be confirmed or some other information hasn't confirmed the correct account info), the initial communication should be limited to a request for contact concerning the person's child (without giving name). No confidential information may be communicated on this account.
- Anyone that sees a message of child abuse or neglect will forward this information to the hotline via the weblink: <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/> or by calling 1-877-237-0004.
- Each region is required to have this posted in the "About" section:

"This account is managed by the DCS (insert name) Region.

We use this account to do diligent searches for families of children in foster care, or at risk of coming into foster care.

When we contact you, we will give you our state of Tennessee email address and telephone number and also ask for your contact information, so we may confidentially discuss why we are reaching out to you.

If you have concerns or want to verify the validity of a message received by this account, please call our office or send an email:

(Insert Regional Name, Address, Phone, Fax, and Email Address)

If you are contacted after regular business hours and have questions about the validity of the message received, please contact the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004 and request an on call Team Leader from (insert region) to contact you.

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You also can visit tn.gov/dcs for more information.

The Department of Children's Services Social Media Account is not for reporting cases of abuse or neglect.

This account is not monitored 24-hours a day

***To report suspected child abuse or neglect call
(877) 237-0004 or visit <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/>***

Intro: This account is managed by the DCS (insert region name)"

Example:

- Smoky Mountain's Social Media account Example:
<https://www.SocialMedia.com/dcs.smokyregion>

This account was approved by Legal and Communications and will be the main example of how regions will utilize this social media tool.