



Guidance for Foster & Kinship Foster Parents

Social Media Use and Confidentiality

Before you share any information about a child in DCF custody on social media, please check with the child’s social worker about what is acceptable. DO NOT post anything without the social worker’s permission.

Social media is loosely defined as web-based communication tools that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, photos and other forms of expression. This includes tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Front Porch Forum, Tumblr, YouTube and listservs.

While Vermont foster care regulations do not specifically address social media, they do address confidentiality. Specifically:

- 315 Foster parents shall treat all personal information regarding foster children and their families as confidential
- 316 Foster parents shall not authorize the publication of the name or photograph of a foster child in a manner that identifies the child as a foster child without written permission of the child’s custodian
- 319 Foster parents shall respect a child’s privacy

Using social media to share information or photos about children in DCF custody or express opinions about the children’s cases can:

- Compromise a child and family’s confidentiality
- Compromise safety because its use often locates a person in a specific place
- Exacerbate sometimes difficult communication patterns and emotions between youth, their families and the agency

At the same time, we also acknowledge that providing a sense of ‘normalcy’ to children in care means helping them feel included —in foster family events, photos, etc. It needs to be done thoughtfully.

If you have any questions, reach out to [your district’s resource coordinator](#) or the child’s social worker.