



CASA of Monterey County Social Media Policy

CASA of Monterey County (“CASA”) recognizes and values the role of social media in our everyday lives. We encourage our staff, volunteers, and board to use social media¹ platforms to highlight the important contribution of our CASA work in the community while remaining aware of the risks and responsibilities associated with an open public forum.

When you engage in social media and online communication, you become a public figure. As a public figure who is associated with CASA, you have a responsibility to help protect this organization and our clients. The following expectations will assist you in making responsible decisions about using social and online media in connection with your role with CASA.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and board members associated with CASA of Monterey County. Nothing herein shall interfere with an employee’s right to engage in protected activity under the NLRA.

Online Communication and Social Media Expectations:

1. **Never reveal confidential information.** Sharing stories illustrating the value of CASA advocacy for children is often the most powerful way to engage the public in our cause. However, the sharing of confidential information about the children and families our network serves is prohibited. This includes names, ages, location, case-specific details, time-specific statements, and photographs. It is acceptable to discuss general details and to use non-time-specific statements so long as they do not contain information recognizable to the family or anyone associated with the family or case. For example, use general terms such as “youth” instead of “13-year-old-girl.” You must be careful to protect the dignity of families, children, and social agencies, even if they are not named. If you are unsure about sharing, check first with your supervisor. Additionally, it is prohibited to post and share publicly internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal confidential communications.

NO: “My 18-year old CASA kid just graduated from Lincoln High...Congratulations!”

YES: “Congratulations to my CASA youth for graduating high school today!”

2. **Avoid the appearance of personal political activity being authorized by or on behalf of CASA.** It is inappropriate for the CASA program to support or oppose any candidate for public office. Please refrain from sharing any activity that would constitute either support for or opposition to candidates for public office when such conduct could be construed as activity on behalf of CASA.
3. **Uphold a respectable reputation.** Be fair and courteous to fellow employees, volunteers, or board members, the families we serve, the stakeholders with whom we work, and the vendors we

¹ **Social media** includes all means of communicating or posting content of any sort on the Internet, including blogs, journals or diaries, personal websites, social networking or affinity sites, bulletin boards or chat rooms.

retain. If you have a complaint or criticism, you are encouraged to address it through the appropriate internal communication channels. Additionally, do not respond to any negative comments posted online about CASA or any other CASA program, including CA CASA, and local and national organizations. We would appreciate you informing the Executive Director if you see any negative representation of the organization online so we may determine the best way to respond or not.

4. **Be considerate.** Never post discriminatory or harassing comments. Be respectful of all individuals and families served by CASA, CASA employees, volunteers, or board members, and community stakeholders, including individuals or organizations within or outside the judicial and child welfare systems or any other persons associated with CASA.

NO: "Great day as a CASA volunteer! The Judge finally made the right decision in our favor."

YES: "Great day as a CASA volunteer! Can't believe what a difference one person can make."

5. **Maintain a high standard of professionalism.** You should always maintain professional relationships. Avoid connecting via social media with a child or family you know through your work with CASA or as a volunteer. If, for some reason, you feel you must communicate through a social network about a CASA-related matter, check first with your supervisor regarding volunteer communications with the child(ren) or family members via social media. You should not add children or families as friends on social media or request that they add you. Remember that your communication while on CASA business may be discoverable in court. Do not communicate with the judge or court regarding a CASA case or any other CASA matter not specific to a case via social media.
6. **Use good judgment.** Refrain from including any inappropriate content, providing links to inappropriate websites, or including any inappropriate photos in postings or comments directly or indirectly referring to CASA, any individual associated with CASA, or your role with the organization. Inappropriate material includes depictions or descriptions of illicit substances and/or their paraphernalia; underage drinking; harassing, hostile, false, or confidential information; and any other acts that violate local, state, or federal law and/or CASA statutes, rules, and regulations. Prejudice or discriminatory content is also prohibited. When using social media in connection with your capacity as a CASA volunteer, staff, or board member, take a moment to consider all online comments with respect to the above framework before posting. Using good judgment extends to the selection of sources of news and research. The sources you base your arguments on should be reputable, well-established, and ideally bipartisan or nonpartisan. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything, so even deleted posts can be searched!
7. **Share public content but not private content.** You can share content from National CASA/GAL's public website, CA CASA's public website, and CASA of Monterey County's public website and social media accounts with the general public. However, you may not share content from any member portal that is password-protected unless it was intended specifically for sharing.
8. **Respect copyright.** Ensure facts are accurate before posting, and you have permission to post any copyrighted information. When discussing others' research or opinions, make it clear that the research or opinions are not coming directly from you by citing the source.

9. **Be transparent.** Your online comments represent only your personal opinions. Never present yourself as a spokesperson for CASA of Monterey County or a spokesperson to address a statewide policy or legislative issue without permission from CA CASA and/or CASA of Monterey County. When permission is granted, communication should align with talking points provided by CA CASA and CASA of Monterey County. Always be clear and open about the nature of your association with CASA, and when necessary, make it clear that your views do not represent those of the organization or anyone else associated with the organization.

10. **Try to add value.** Does your post provide worthwhile information and perspective? Does it pertain to your mission and work? Does it help you, your coworkers, volunteers, and supporters better understand and feel more connected to our cause? Does it build a positive sense of community?

Violation of Social Media Policy:

Online content produced by CASA staff, volunteers, or board members in conflict with the above guidelines or including discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated. It may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from your role with CASA of Monterey County.

Furthermore, retaliation or any negative action against any staff, volunteer, or board member for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating with an investigation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from your role with CASA of Monterey County.

Acknowledgment of Social Media Policy

I have read, understood, and will abide by CASA of Monterey County's social media Policy, which will enhance the credibility of the CASA role and the integrity of my activity as a CASA volunteer, employee, or board member.

Print Name

Signature

Date

I acknowledge that the above electronic signature shall be considered as an original signature for all purposes and shall have the same force and effect as an original signature.