

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

P.O. Box 419064, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9064



March 1, 2016

CSSP LETTER: 16-04

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS
 ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
 ALL BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS

<u>Reason for this Transmittal</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> State Law, Regulation and/or Change
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Law, Regulation and/ or Change
<input type="checkbox"/> Court Order or Settlement Change
<input type="checkbox"/> Clarification requested by One or More Counties
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiated by DCSS

SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT AGENCIES

This letter provides local child support agencies (LCSAs) with policy regarding the use of social media as a case management tool.

Family Code (FC) § 17212 requires LCSAs to prevent the disclosure of confidential child support information. Social media allows users to share information and participate in social networking in a public environment. Due to the shared and public nature of social media, when using these resources, LCSAs must take steps to ensure participant privacy is protected.

Direct communication with an individual via a social media communication system could lead to a breach of FC § 17212. Therefore, direct communication with participants using private communication systems (such as instant messages or chat) is not allowed. In addition, LCSA staff may not conduct any child support activity while signed in to a personal account.

LCSAs may establish an agency page on social media websites to provide general information to the public and answer general, non-case specific questions. When communicating via their agency's page, LCSAs should clearly self-identify as a child support representative. In addition, LCSAs should closely monitor their agency's social media pages and remove any customer posts which may either be offensive or disclose protected information. Finally, LCSAs may not directly follow or link to participants' social media pages.

LCSAs may also use social media websites as locate tools. LCSAs may access social media sites to search public postings of account owners to locate a participant's physical whereabouts, employment, or assets as long as that information is publicly shared. Information obtained in this manner must be independently verified. Verification of information obtained from social media sites may come from any and all other resources relied upon for confirming case information as outlined in

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22 CCR §113100. This policy is not intended to limit or restrict the use of information obtained through social media as evidence for litigation purposes, as all litigation matters are subject to court discretion.

No other use of social media for case management is permitted.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Policy and Program branch at (916) 464-5883.

Sincerely,

o/s

VICKIE K. CONTRERAS
Deputy Director
Child Support Services Division