

# **GUIDELINES ON PERSONAL WEB PAGES AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR DENTISTS**

## **THE DENTAL COUNCIL OF HONG KONG**

### **1. Personal Web Page**

- 1.1 A dentist can publish his personal web page with the following information only:-
- the dentist's name;
  - his profession as a dentist;
  - photographs unrelated to the dentist's profession and practice; and
  - any information other than dental information.

### **2. Social Media**

- 2.1 Social media covers a number of internet based tools and instant communication mobile apps, which allow people to create and exchange content. Without being exhaustive, it includes: blogs, internet forums, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Line, WeChat.
- 2.2 Information or comments about patients with identifiable personal data should not be posted and discussed on personal webpage and social media sites.
- 2.3 Anything posted on social media, even in private domain, can be easily copied and redistributed without a dentist's knowledge. A dentist should presume that everything that he shares online will be there permanently.
- 2.4 The online image can impact on a dentist's professional life. Information, including photographs and videos, which could bring the profession into disrepute should be avoided.
- 2.5 A dentist should regularly review the privacy settings to ensure that information is not accessed by unintended audiences. However, a dentist should remember that even the strictest privacy settings do not guarantee that information will be kept secure and any information that posted could be viewed by anyone including the dentist's patients and colleagues.
- 2.6 Even if a dentist does not identify himself as a dental professional, he may still put his registration at risk if displaying inappropriate behaviour whilst using social media.
- 2.7 A dentist must not use social media as a mechanism to raise concerns about the possible abuse of children or vulnerable adults. These concerns must be referred to the appropriate authority such as Social Welfare Department.