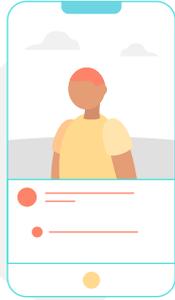# Your guide to social media

As you begin to navigate the world as a doctor, your online presence will need to reflect your new role and workplace. Follow these simple guidelines to keep it professional, ethical and secure on social media.

Be careful about what you say and how you say it

Doctors have an ethical and legal responsibility to maintain patient confidentiality – regardless if the audience are friends, doctors, or the public. Ensure you have patient consent before posting anything online, and that any patient or situation could not be identified by what you have posted, or in combination with what others have posted.

Keep your friends close and others... not so close

It is important to maintain clear professional boundaries to protect both doctor and patient, and this includes online. In general, it is best to avoid online relationships with current or former patients. If a patient does request to add or connect with you online, politely let them know it is your policy not to establish online friendships with patients.

Consider the destiny of your data

Even the most stringent privacy settings can still leave your information accessible online. A good rule to use is if you don't want it to be viewed online, don't post it. Recruiters often use social media to search for information on candidates, so it is important to ensure your online presence reflects your professional values, and won't impact any future opportunities.

Take control of your privacy

Most social networking sites will have privacy settings enabling you to control (to some extent) how accessible your information is. Make sure to familiarise yourself with the privacy settings for each site you are signed up to, and ensure they are set to a level that is secure enough to protect you.

Maintain professional standards online

Social media has challenged the concepts of 'public' and 'private', and changed the way in which online aspects of private lives are accessible to others. Once something is online, it is almost impossible to remove and can quickly spread beyond your control. Try Googling yourself to check you are comfortable with the results, and ensure you are familiar with your privacy settings across all social sites.