

Political Neutrality

Te Noho Taiapa

Staying Politically Neutral:
Social Media



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa



What is Political Neutrality?

Political neutrality means staying impartial and not showing support in your official role for any political party or candidate.

This is crucial to maintain the trust and confidence of the current and future governments and the public that public servants will perform their role fairly and will not pursue their own interests.

Let's explore some political neutrality scenarios and see what possible options we might have in each case.

At the end of this guide, there are a few questions to revise what you will learn through the scenarios.

Scenario

While scrolling through LinkedIn during your lunch break, you see a post from one of the main political parties talking about public sector services.

Their position is slightly frustrating, as in your opinion it does not accurately reflect current practices.

You think that the information should be corrected. You write a brief response sharing your insights hoping to provide clarity.

What do you do next?

Here's one way the situation might play out

You post the response that you have written.

After you post your insights, you get a message from your manager (you are connected on LinkedIn). They would like to have a chat with you.

You meet your manager. They are concerned about your post as your LinkedIn account shows your job and agency.

Your manager suggests you probably need to delete the post.

Now, you could take a different path here

You have a chat with your manager in the first instance.

You ask their advice on whether you should post the response or not.

Keep your politics out of your job and your job out of your politics.

Your manager asks if your LinkedIn account shows your job or if the post is related to your work.

You tell him that your LinkedIn account does show your job and the post is not related to work.

You decide not to post the response.

There should be a clear separation between public servants' work role and their personal use of social media.

Additional information

The scenarios that you viewed here are just some of the examples you could come across in real life and they could each vary in detail depending on your role, organisation, experience, and other factors. Always use your judgement and experience to evaluate the situation and decide on the right course of action.

Remember, a good rule of thumb is – Keep your politics out of your job and your job out of your politics.

If you are ever in doubt, reach out to your manager in the first instance, or to the integrity and ethics champion at your agency.

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