



International School of Western Australia

Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

It has been estimated that, across the globe, two people start a weblog every second. Add this to the phenomenal growth in Facebook, Twitter and other online forums and it's clear that the internet is rearranging many things about how schools communicate. Furthermore, as the Australian Curriculum specifies "Communicating with ICT", via conduits including those classified as social media, as an expected skill for students across the curriculum, teaching staff should be expected to be conversant in the use and appropriate application of social media contexts.

ISWA has developed a Social Media Policy for Staff to ensure employee behaviour on Social Networks is responsible and acceptable by school standards. G:\2017-18_NEW\Policies_and_Procedures\POLICIES & PROCEDURES\CODE OF BEHAVIOUR .pdf

2. Defining Social Media

Social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Social media may be defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations.....that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."

Social media, therefore, are a group of online media that allow social communication, as a superset beyond more conventional notions of social communication. Anthony Mayfield in his eBook "What is Social Media?" says the new kinds of online media share most of the following characteristics:

Participation: everyone who is interested can contribute and provide feedback on an issue through social media. The line between media and audience is blurred.

Openness: most social media services encourage feedback and contribution allowing users to vote, comment and share information. Any form of barrier prohibiting access and the sharing of content is non-existent. Very little is a secret anymore. The results of sporting events, awards ceremonies, the death of a celebrity or the occurrence of a natural disaster can be broadcasted to the whole world within seconds.

Conversation: social media are a conversation between two, three or more users whereas traditional media is generally a one-way broadcast.

Community: people who share a common interest (such as a school, sporting team, film genre or political view) can communicate effectively and instantaneously as soon as something occurs.

Connectedness: most kinds of social media allow for links to other websites, video material, resources, and people, creating a web of connectivity between users and content.

There are various forms of social media and there are always new forms of social media being developed. Currently, the main forms of social media include, but are not limited to:

- **Social networking sites:** Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, Google+, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Bebo and Friendster;
- **Video and photo sharing websites:** Content Communities such as Snapchat, Flickr, wessabe and YouTube;
- **Micro-blogging sites:** Twitter, Posterous, Dailybooth;
- **Blogs:** including corporate blogs and personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications;
- **Podcasts:** including corporate podcasts and personal podcasts;

- **Forums and discussion boards:** e.g. local discussion boards, Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups;
- **Virtual game worlds:** e.g. World of Warcraft;
- **Virtual Social Worlds:** e.g. Second Life;
- **Online encyclopaedias:** e.g. Wikis such as Wikipedia, Geo-wiki, GeoNames and Sidewiki; and
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools, (together called **Social Media**).

3. Relevant Legislation

The laws that apply in the 'real world' also apply in cyberspace.

Although there are a several benefits that social media can bring to both personal usage and school purposes, there are certain risks and implications that can arise. While Australian law has not entirely caught up with technology and there is no one specific piece of legislation that regulates social media sites and the use of social media, it is important to keep in mind that what employees and employers do with social media can have real world legal consequences.

Schools need to be mindful that they must provide clear guidance to their employees in their social media policy to ensure employees are aware of their social media responsibilities in the workplace. There have also been cases where the inappropriate use of social media against co-workers (such as harassment) outside of work hours has resulted in employees being dismissed for serious misconduct.

Fair Work Commission have confirmed that proof of excessive use or the inappropriate use of social media during or outside of work hours may constitute a valid reason for termination of employment. Employers have used Facebook profiles as evidence in workers' compensation cases and to dismiss rogue employees who have continually failed to show up for work without any apparent reason.

Acts and Regulations that may be associated with the use of social media may include but are not exclusive to:

- Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006
- Copyright Act, 1968
- Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000
- Copyright Amendment (Moral Rights) Act 2000
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Privacy Act 1988
- School Education Act 1999
- School Education Regulations 2000
- Teacher Registration Act 2012
- Teacher Registration (General) Regulations 2012
- Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979
- Telecommunications Act 1997.

It is recommended that all employees are advised that social media conversations may also be covered within school policies pertaining to privacy, defamation, and intellectual property. Employees should be made aware of the concept of leaving a "digital footprint", i.e. communication via social media and email is virtually indelible.

4. Social Media and Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites.

Social media marketing programs usually centre on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the school itself. Hence, word-of-mouth drives this form of marketing, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media.

Social media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access. Increased communication for organisations fosters brand awareness and often, improved customer service. Social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for schools to implement marketing campaigns. Schools should be equally aware that a poorly delivered online presence, via any social media conduit, can work against a school's reputation. It is now common practice for media journalists to trawl an organisation's web-presence for newsworthy items.

Besides research tools, there are many companies providing specialised platforms/tools for social media marketing, such as tools for:

- Social Media Monitoring
- Social Aggregation
- Social Book Marking and Tagging
- Social Analytics and Reporting
- Automation
- Social Media
- Blog Marketing
- Validation.

5. Risks associated with online social media activity

There are risks associated with the use of social media. These include but are not exclusive to:

- Breaches of the school's Code of Conduct for employees.
- Plagiarism or breach of copyright conditions when using or reproducing material.
- Excessive work-time used to browse social media applications.
- Social media put to an inappropriate use.
- Employee comments inadvertently bringing the School's reputation into disrepute.
- Employees outlining personal political views whilst using their school contact.
- Employees, using pseudonyms or 'avatars' representing themselves as someone else either within the school or outside of the school.
- Employees making promises or statements regarding the school's operations which are misleading.
- Employees disclosing personal information relating to school staff, students or parents or official information which is confidential or 'commercial-in-confidence'.

6. Guidelines for rules for employees

The following guidelines may assist in providing employees with rules when using social media. Employees:

- Need to read, understand, and comply with the School's Internet and Email Usage Policy and Guidelines and the Social Media Policy and Guidelines

- Need to clearly understand and agree that the school has the right to and may monitor staff use of the internet, email, and social media at any time
- Should declare their purpose and their position as a representative of the school, using an official staff account. Depending on how close the relationship is to the topic being discussed the employee may wish to provide a graduated level of identification
- Should not comment in depth on the activities of another sub-school or division of the school apart from providing information that is on the public record, unless employees have authority to do so
- Must avoid any statement that might bring the school into disrepute
- Must not commit the school to any action or initiative without appropriate authority
- Must not disclose official information unless authorised to do so or unless it is already in the public domain
- Should be aware of laws covering libel, defamation, privacy, and the protection of intellectual property
- Must ensure all activities are in line with all other relevant school policies
- Must be apolitical, impartial, and professional and avoid any statements that might be interpreted as advocating government policies or criticising the policies of political parties or groups
- Must protect personal information entrusted to the school from distribution into the public domain
- Must have approval from the relevant line manager to use social media in an official capacity
- Should take note of any copyright/Creative Commons and Intellectual Property notices attached to content they wish to use/repurpose. Additionally, employees should cite or otherwise acknowledge content sources when they are known.

7. Inappropriate use of social media

Inappropriate use, read in conjunction with a school internet/email policy should include, but would not be limited to:

- Conducting private business during working hours.
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive, or otherwise objectionable language in content.
- Accessing, downloading, or transmitting any kind of sexually explicit material, violent images including graphic images of blood or gore (without medical purpose).
- Accessing, downloading, or transmitting information on the use and construction of weapons, explosives and other tools of violence or terrorism.
- Accessing, downloading, or transmitting any material deemed to be illegal under WA or Australian Commonwealth law.
- Accessing, downloading, or transmitting hate speeches and overt racism; material extolling the inherent or moral superiority or inferiority of a race, ethnic group, or sexual orientation; racial epithets; or religious bigotry.
- Compromising the privacy of any person.
- Using services for personal political purposes.
- Using services for industrial campaigns (apart from messages sent by officials of unions and professional associations for informational or consultative purposes).
- Attempting to gain unauthorised access to the computing resources of other organisations.
- Disrupting the integrity of the school's data or information services.
- Staff must NOT have school parents as FRIENDS on Social Media (if they do then they must be immediately deleted)
- Staff must NOT have school students as FRIENDS on Social Media for two years after students or staff have left the school (if they do then they must be immediately deleted)

8. ISWA Social Media and Networking Policy and Procedures

Statement of context

The ever-changing and inherently public nature of online communication presents a range of challenges in safeguarding the ISWA community, its employees and most importantly, the safety and security of the School's students.

The School recognises that employees may use social media channels outside school hours in a private capacity; however, such use can still have a negative impact upon the School and the School wishes to ensure that employees take great care to avoid this by acting in the School's best interests when on-line always either on school or private equipment.

This policy applies to all employees of the School and all persons who work at or with the School in a casual or voluntary capacity.

Policy

Employees must not use the School's computer systems to access social media channels, unless the access is for teaching, pastoral care or educational purposes and the employee has the permission of the Principal.

Employees may also be held accountable for any social media use both within and outside the School, on school owned or private equipment, where the School may be recognised, and its name brought into disrepute.

Inappropriate use of social media against the employer or co-workers outside of work hours and/or excessive personal use of social media during work hours may, in certain circumstances, result in employees being dismissed for serious misconduct.

References

[G:\2017-18 NEW\Policies and Procedures\POLICIES & PROCEDURES\INTERNET & EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE \(STAFF\) - ISWA Policy.pdf](G:\2017-18 NEW\Policies and Procedures\POLICIES & PROCEDURES\INTERNET & EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE (STAFF) - ISWA Policy.pdf)

[G:\2017-18 NEW\Policies and Procedures\POLICIES & PROCEDURES\ICT ACCEPTABLE USE \(STUDENTS\) - ISWA Policy.pdf](G:\2017-18 NEW\Policies and Procedures\POLICIES & PROCEDURES\ICT ACCEPTABLE USE (STUDENTS) - ISWA Policy.pdf)

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What are social media channels?

There are various forms of social media channels and there are always new forms of social media being developed. Currently, the main forms of social media include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites: Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, Google+, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Bebo and Friendster
- Video and photo sharing websites: Content Communities such as Snapchat, Flickr, Wessabe and YouTube
- Micro-blogging sites: Twitter, Posterous, Dailybooth
- Blogs: including corporate blogs and personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications
- Podcasts: including corporate podcasts and personal podcasts

- Forums and discussion boards: e.g. local discussion boards, Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups
- Virtual game worlds: e.g. World of Warcraft
- Virtual Social Worlds: e.g. Second Life
- Online encyclopaedias: e.g. Wikis such as Wikipedia, Geo-wiki, GeoNames and Sidewiki
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools, (together called Social Media).

These channels offer individuals the opportunity to connect with people, create and share information and ideas and develop relationships through online communities and networks.

Procedures and Rules

1. Employees are required to declare their purpose and their position as a representative of the School when using an official staff account
2. Employees must not use social media channels, Skype, or similar programs to communicate with current students unless for education or teaching purposes and the employee has the permission of the Principal
3. A personal relationship with current students via social media channels (for example, adding a current student as a 'friend' or 'follower' on Facebook, MySpace or Twitter or accepting an offer to join theirs) may exceed the accepted bounds of a teacher/student relationship and may leave the employee open to allegations of improper conduct. Therefore, employees may not invite students into their personal social networking site or accept an invitation to theirs and may not use social networking sites to email or contact students unless for education or teaching purposes and the employee has the permission of the Principal
4. Employees must be aware of "Conditions of Use" for social media sites to be used for teaching purposes and that these conditions could preclude account use by students below certain ages (13 years is frequently stated)
5. Employees are advised to NOT accept ex-students or parents of current students as 'friends' or 'followers' on social media channels
6. Employees must not post images that include other employees, volunteers, or students on social media channels
7. Employees must not use the School's logo or create School branded accounts which could be interpreted as representing the School
8. Employees must not commit the school to any action or initiative without appropriate authority
9. Consistent with privacy laws and other School policies, employees must not, under any circumstances, reveal through social media channels confidential, proprietary, or privileged information related to the School or its students, staff members, finance, policies, or procedures, which is not otherwise publicly available
10. Employees should take note of and comply with any copyright/Creative Commons notices attached to content they wish to use/repurpose. Additionally, employees must cite or otherwise acknowledge content sources when they are known
11. Employees must be apolitical, impartial, and professional and avoid any statements that might be interpreted as advocating government policies or criticising the policies of political parties or groups
12. Employees must not either during or after hours, under any circumstances, disparage or speak adversely about the School or other schools, School business matters or activities, its employees, or its students through social media channels
13. Employees are reminded that they should not have any expectation of privacy when it comes to content and information stored or posted in the social media environment. Even if employees

intend to keep the information private, it may unintentionally enter the public domain. For example, online content may inadvertently be viewed or accessed by colleagues, the media, students, or families of students

14. Employees may not store or post inappropriate content and information in the social media environment, which can relate to the School, may adversely affect the School's reputation, a student's reputation and the individual employee's reputation
15. Employees may not identify or discuss co-workers or post photographs that include co-workers unless you have obtained their permission first
16. Employees need to clearly understand that the School has the right to and may monitor staff use of the internet, email, and social media at any time
17. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee. Disciplinary action may include limitation or removal of access to School Systems or termination of employment or a contractor's engagement with the School.

Employees need to read, understand, and comply with this policy in addition to the School's Internet and Email Usage Policies. The above requirements apply regardless of whether you have restricted the access to your personal site to selected persons only.

Policy Category	Operational
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Policy Owner	Principal
Amendment History	
Date	Amendment