



## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY PARENTS**

### Rationale

St Peter's realises that contemporary life requires adapting to ever changing methods of communication. The School has policies for appropriate use of Social Media by staff and students.

As part of the St Peter's Community, parents of the School also have a responsibility to engage appropriately with Social Media that is linked to the School. To this end, the School has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for parents when participating in Social Media activities, eg classroom blogs, any School Facebook pages, emails or any other Social Media platform/s used by parents in connection with the school either directly, or indirectly in circumstances where the school a parent, staff member and/or student of the school is identifiable.

The school encourages parents to set and maintain high ethical standards in their use of social networking. Be respectful of the opinions of others. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. Your online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use in face- to-face interactions, and be in accordance with the values of our community.

*Remember your responsibility as a good model for good digital citizenship to your children.*

### DEFINITIONS Social Media

Social media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone (even private individuals) to publish or access information. Social Media may include (although is not limited to):

- social networking sites (eg Facebook, Instagram, Yammer);
- video and photo sharing websites (eg Youtube, Flickr, Vimeo);
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- blogs hosted by media outlets (eg 'comments' or 'your say' feature on theage.com.au);
- micro-blogging (eg Twitter);
- wikis and online collaborations (eg Wikipedia);
- forums discussion boards and groups (eg Google groups, Whirlpool);
- vod and podcasting;
- online multiplayering gaming platforms (eg World of Warcraft, Second life);

- electronic messaging (including email and SMS);
- geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare).

## **GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines apply:

- You must adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant Social Media platform/ website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment, other applicable laws and school policies;
- You must ensure that you do not use or disclose any confidential information, post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;
- Child protection protocols must always be observed;
- Under no circumstances should disrespectful or offensive comments be made about staff, students, parents or the school in general. Parents are requested not to comment upon nor forward unsupported information, eg rumours concerning the school or comment or post material that might otherwise cause damage to the school's or a staff member's reputation or bring it into disrepute;
- Be mindful that, by posting your comments and having online conversations etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world. Even with the strictest privacy settings be aware that comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum;
- Parents should never discuss sensitive school matters with other parents using Facebook, blogs and other social media outlets. As noted above, when posting, even on the strictest privacy settings, parents should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain;
- MACS Anti-bullying Policy applies to activities which are both online and in the physical workplace;
- Before posting photographs and/or videos, permission should be sought from the subject. This is especially the case where photographs and/or videos include parents of students and/or staff members of the school. No photographs of students of the school (with the exception of a parent/s own children and where approved by the relevant parent/s from time to time) are to be posted;
- Keep in mind that school staff members are not permitted under the Social Media Policy - Staff to either make or accept invitations to or from parents to join Social Media sites;

- If you come across positive or negative remarks about the school and/ or its operations online that you believe are important, you may pass those posts to the Principal who will consider such comments on a case by case basis;
- Any Social Media forum that is set up by any official or unofficial school group and carries the school's name, ie: *St Peter's Parents & Friends*: must provide access for the Principal or a nominee of the Principal to view and moderate.
- If you don't get it right, be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make clear what you have done to fix it. Apologize if the situation warrants it. If it's a major mistake, eg reporting confidential information, let someone know immediately so the school can take the proper steps to help minimize any impact it may have.

#### **COMPLIANCE/ BREACH OF THIS POLICY**

- Failure to comply with the policy by a parent will result in mediation and an opportunity for parties to resolve that matter in a restorative manner. If however if such breaches continue, this may, in serious cases, put at risk the continuation of their child's enrolment at the school.
- Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of your enrolment contractual obligations, sexual harassment, child protection or criminal laws, discrimination or some other contravention of the law.
- It is important to note that reports of cyber bullying and other technology abuses may result in a notification to the Police or other relevant authority/ies where the school is legally obliged to do so.
- The reputation of St Peter's and that of its staff are not to be defamed on any form of Social Media and if legal action is warranted Prior Law with Alan Jenes Solicitors in Bentleigh and Bentleigh East has been retained to represent the schools and staff.

#### **POLICY TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW**

Date	Action	Who involved
May 2016	Policy Ratified	School Board
May 2022	Policy to be reviewed	