SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to encourage acceptable and beneficial use of social media by staff employed at the Academy of Mary Immaculate. It is recognised that most employees may use or interact with social media at work and in a personal context.

Policy coverage

This policy applies to all employees at the College including:

- College Principal
- Deputy Principal and others in leadership roles
- Business Manager and staff with financial responsibilities
- all other teaching staff
- all other non-teaching staff
- all students and visitors

Definitions

Social Media are online services and tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information.

Copyright use the College crest is a registered Trademark and should not be used without the Principal's written permission

IT Helpdesk department is an online network support system in the College available should any issues arise

Age Restrictions students under the age of sixteen are not permitted to have profiles on many social media sites

Video, audio and photo sharing websites*:* are sites that allow you to upload and share videos, sounds and photos which can be viewed/heard by web users the world over (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, iTunes U, Vimeo, SoundCloud, Instagram, Pinterest).

Blog: A blog (short for web log) is a kind of online diary, where you regularly post about your life, your hobbies, business, news or other interests. It is a way of having your own space in the virtual world. It involves interacting with blogs that include corporate blogs and personal blogs (e.g., WordPress, Blogger). This also includes interacting with blogs hosted by media outlets, e.g. 'comments' or 'your say' feature on theage.com.au.

Microblogging apps*:* are websites that post micro-blog like posts to announce what you are currently doing (e.g., Twitter, Yammer, Tumblr).

Location-based apps: (also known as *Geolocation)* are applications with the capability to detect and record where you and other people are located.

Wikis: are websites where users create, edit and share information about a particular subject or topic. This includes interacting with wikis and online collaborations, e.g. Wikipedia, Wikispaces and interacting with forums, discussion boards and groups, e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool.

Online gaming: are games played over some form of computer network and are often based around a community of users (e.g., Steam).

News aggregation: news aggregators provide a list of the latest news stories published by users from a range of different web sites (e.g., Digg).

Ning: an online platform for people and organizations to create custom social networks around specific interests. Ning offers the ability to create an invited closed community website with a customised appearance and feel, feature sets such as forums, blogs, photos, and videos.

Forums or message boards*:* are online discussion sites where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages.

Online multiplayer gaming platforms: are multiplayer video games which are capable of supporting hundreds or thousands of players simultaneously and usually feature at least one persistent world (e.g., World of Warcraft).

Policy Statement

There is great potential for the use of social media in school communities in terms of educational outcomes and as a means of communication. However, employees also need to understand the expectations of the College when using social media in a professional and personal capacity as there are also workplace risks that must be appropriately managed.

The following are some of the major risks associated with the use of social media:

- Reputational damage to organisations and people;
- Disclosure of confidential information;
- Posting of offensive, bullying, harassing, and discriminatory material;
- Misuse of intellectual property; and
- For teachers, breaching the *Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct* issued by the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

The College is committed to reducing the risks posed by social media. As such staff must recognise:

- online behaviour should at all times demonstrate respect for the dignity of each person;
- the need to behave in an ethical manner when using social media (even for personal communication) as those communications can reflect on their role at the School and must be consistent with the Catholic beliefs and ethos of the School and professional expectations and standards;
- their ability to serve as a positive role model for students and as a representative of the School is a critical aspect of their employment; and
- social media activities may be visible to current, past or prospective staff, students and parents.

Procedures

This policy applies to you when you engage in social media activity in the following circumstances:

- When you use the College's IT systems or equipment, even if you are engaging in personal use.
- When you convey information about the College.

It is the expectation of the College that you consider the following before posting online or using any social media platform:

- Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the Academy of Mary Immaculate, Staff, Students, Families or Alumnae.
- When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the College. For example, the College crest is a registered Trademark and should not be used without the Principal's written permission
- Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on both you and the College.
- Ensure you advise the IT Helpdesk department before creating a social media profile. This keeps a record of the College's online presence and will provide you with useful information and resources.
- Be aware that by law, students under the age of thirteen are not permitted to have profiles on many social media sites. Also be aware that some parents do not allow their daughters to have social media profiles. If you are creating a social media profile for your class, please ensure the Head of eLearning/Systems Manager is advised before emailing or posting a letter to the parents/guardians requesting they respond if they do not want their daughter to participate. Contact with parents must be on the approved College email or letter template
- Ensure facts are correct before posting on social media. From a professional perspective always review content for grammatical and spelling errors.
- Content on social media sites should protect the College's image by always remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Online content should not reflect negatively on the College brand, image or be in violation of the College values.
- Be mindful of sharing too much information about individuals through social media. Consent must be obtained from Parents/Legal Guardians before individual student photographs or videos are uploaded to social media sites. Photographs of Students may only be done for educational purposes and the full Student name should not be posted. Christian names only if needed should be used.
- As an employee of the Academy of Mary Immaculate, please ensure your social media activity maintains the standards and expectations of the College. Activities that may be deemed inappropriate include, but are not limited to;

    - Use of inappropriate language, whether it be explicit, sexual or threatening.
    - Speaking ill of employers, colleagues, families, students or alumni.
    - Uploading inappropriate photographs or videos.

- In the interest of protecting staff and student privacy the College expectation is that staff **do not** "friend" current students with their personal profile. There are no exemptions to this expectation.

Work-related use of Social Media

Student Learning

The use of online learning communities by employees for educational purposes must be in accordance with other relevant College policies and procedures relating to online learning.

Generally

When using social media for work-related purposes, employees must:

- first obtain the consent of the Principal (which can be for a specific instance or for a general purpose or role) before:

- posting any material that may be perceived as being made "on behalf" of the College (e.g. any commentary, School information, photographs of the College, students, staff or other identifying images); and
- using the School's logo, trademarks, official photographs or any other intellectual property of proprietary materials; and
- not post inappropriate material or commentary that breaches other policies outlining expected behaviours of staff at the College.

If there could be reasonable concerns that posting any material could be considered inappropriate (e.g. in light of potential privacy or copyright obligations), then an employee must first raise those concerns with the Principal before posting the material.

Personal use of Social Media

Generally

It is recognised that staff may use social media in their personal life. However, it is also recognised that such use may impact on the employment relationship.

Accordingly, a staff member's personal use of social media must:

- not bring the College into disrepute or interfere with, or compromise their duties or responsibilities to the College or students;
- comply with other policies of the School and professional standards that outline expected behaviours of employees when posting personal comments that relate to, or can be identified as relating to, School issues (e.g. discussing or referencing employees, students, policies or anything related to, or reflecting upon the College); and
- take steps to ensure that friends, family or other acquaintances are aware of the need to use discretion when they post images or information about the employee on their own social media forums.

To avoid potentially breaching this policy or compromising the professional expectations of them as employees at the College, it is recommended that staff members' use of social media not involve connections with the following persons on social media forums (for example, being "friends" on Facebook):

- recent former students (i.e. enrolled at the School within a two year period before connecting); or
- parents of current students, unless special circumstances exist (e.g. a parent is a personal friend or former student is a relative) and the employee has advised the Principal of the connection and the circumstances.

Students

Employees must NOT connect with students or interact with, or post images of, students on their own private social media forums (for example, employees must not be "friends" with students on Facebook) while at school.

An exception to this requirement is when prior approval for the connection has been obtained from the Principal on the basis that a staff member and a student will appropriately interact within the valid context of a legitimate purpose (for example, both are family members/relatives or both are members of a community sporting team and interactions are purely for the purpose of participating in that sport).

Security, Privacy and Access

To avoid potentially breaching this policy or compromising the professional expectations of them as employees at the College, it is recommended that staff:

- ensure the privacy settings of their social media profiles are appropriately set to avoid putting their privacy at risk (for example, minimum recommendation for Facebook accounts: settings set to "only friends" and NOT "Friends of Friends" or "Networks and Friends" as these open your content to a large group of unknown people); and
- recognise that even if they implement the maximum security settings for their social media profiles, the security settings on social media forums cannot guarantee that communications placed online do not become more publicly available than was intended (employees should always assume that posts or communications online may become public).
-

Employees must understand that the type of security settings used cannot excuse breaches of this policy if the material posted is inappropriate and becomes more publicly available than was intended.

Consequences of Breaching this Policy

Non-compliance with this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the circumstances, disciplinary action can be up to and including termination of employment.

Related Documents

Supporting documents which have helped to develop the policy include:

- **Code of Conduct/Behaviour Policy**
- **Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct issued by the Victorian Institute of Teaching**
- **Acceptable Use of ICT Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Anti-Harassment Policy**
- **Anti-Discrimination Policy**
- **Privacy Policy**
- **Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2022**

Date to be reviewed

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Release Date	Review Date
1.0	Paul Finneran		December 2017	December 2018
2.0	Paul Finneran	Reformatted spacing throughout the document; Added phrase "while at school" regarding student use of social media under 'personal use'	November 2020	May 2021
2.1	Andrew Baker	Agreement updates	May 2021	May 2023
2.2	Andrew Baker	No changes	May 2023	May 2025
2.3	Andrew Baker	Social media age changed	May 2023	May 2027

STAFF MEMBER DECLARATION

- I _____ being a staff member of the Academy of Mary Immaculate hereby acknowledge that I have read the above policy on Social Media.

- I understand and abide by the College expectations and guidelines listed in this document. I agree in all circumstances that I will abide by the acceptable standards of behaviour set by the College for the use of social media
  018
- I understand if the College considers that a staff member has in any way failed to comply with this policy, it may:

    - Immediately remove the staff member's access to any part of the College's computer system (including email or internet)
    - Audit and view all material viewed on, sent to and from its computer system (including internet sites and email attachments); and/or
    - Take appropriate disciplinary measures against the staff member as outlined in the Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement (CEMEA) 2022

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____