

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

SAINT MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL
KEILOR DOWNS



St Mary MacKillop School has a strong commitment to child safety as is reflected in our Vision Statement: “In and through positive relationships, we aspire to protect all children under our care, prioritising their safety and wellbeing.” We continually strive to ensure that every child is safe from harm including all forms of abuse. We exercise zero tolerance to abuse.

Rationale

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

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 School when using social media in a professional and personal capacity as there are also workplace risks that must be appropriately managed.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, students, parents, care givers & wider school community of Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School and should be read in conjunction with other policies related to behaviour, professional conduct and responsibilities, and use of information and communication technologies. These include policies issued by external bodies such as the Catholic Education Melbourne.

Definition

Social media is the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms. It encompasses, but not limited to, popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TiK Tok, Snap Chat, Twitter and YouTube and also includes blogs, forums, wikis, photo galleries and videos.

Policy

Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School community members are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected in a physical work environment. This includes:

- Being impartial and professional
- Behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- Dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- Being sensitive to the diversity of colleagues, peers, students and the community
- Taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest or perceptions thereof
- Protecting the integrity and reputation of Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School, its students, student parents and staff
- Complying with applicable laws and legislation, including copyright, intellectual property, privacy, financial disclosure, defamation and other such applicable laws
- Protecting the privacy and security of Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School, its employees, students, student parents, partners and suppliers.

All official communication via social media must be authorised by either the Principal or a delegate:

- Only authorised employees may create social media identities, profiles or accounts that use the Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School name, emblem or brand, or are designed to represent the school in any way.
- Only authorised employees may officially represent Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School, and only in authorised social media platforms, as outlined in this policy.

Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School expects that all employees exercise sound judgement and common sense when using social media. Employees using social media in a personal capacity must take due care to ensure that any comments, opinions, photographs or contributions made online are their own, as private citizens, and cannot be interpreted as an official statement or position of Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School.

Personal Use of Social Media

The School recognises that you may wish to use social media in your personal life. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit your personal expression or online activities.

However, School Community members should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the School in certain circumstances via your personal use of social media when you can be identified as a School community member. Accordingly, you should comply with this policy to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimised.

Updated 2021

You are personally responsible for the content published by you, or in your name, in a personal capacity on any form of social media platform.

Where your comments or profile can identify you as a School community member, you must:

- only disclose and discuss publicly available information;
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant School and governing body policies;
- expressly state on all postings identifying you as a School community member that the stated views are your own and are not those of the School;
- be polite and respectful to all people you interact with;
- adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws;

You must not:

- post 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;
- imply that you are authorised to speak as a representative of the School, nor give the impression that the views you express are those of the School;
- use the identity or likeness of another School Community member;
- imply you are authorised to speak on behalf of the School, or give the impression that any views you express are those of the School;
- use a school email address or any School logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of your personal comment;
- use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in your capacity as a School community member;
- post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another School community member;
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the School's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

Legal Liability

When individuals choose to go public with opinions via a blog, Social Networking Sites or a personal web site, they are legally responsible for their commentary. Individuals can be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. Employees of Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School should exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations. Outside parties can pursue legal action against you for postings.

Disciplinary Action

- Non-compliance with this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, which could lead to termination of employment or legal proceedings.
- Unacceptable use of social media may be a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination or some other contravention of law.
- Saint Mary MacKillop Primary School employees who use social media in their own time using their own resources should note that their private comments posted publically could potentially have repercussions at work. Such instances will be reviewed on a case by case basis with consideration to the possible damage to the reputation of Hazelwood North Primary School.
- Parents using school developed social media must also act in accordance with this policy and other related policies and laws.
- Unacceptable use of social media within the school will be initially dealt with by school leaders but may also be referred to the Police and action may be taken if laws are broken.
- Parents are to refrain from making derogatory or inflammatory comments regarding the school, school staff, students or other parents.

Identification and Reporting Inappropriate use.

If you notice inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to the School, or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, you should report the circumstances via email to the principal.

Related Policies

The Social Media Policy has linkages to other relevant School policies and professional expectations, for example:

- ***Code of Conduct (Staff Handbook)***
- ***Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct issued by the Victorian Institute of Teaching***
- ***Acceptable Use of ICT Policy***
- ***Anti-Bullying Policy***
- ***Bullying and Harassment Policy***

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually to take account of any changed technology, legislation, expectations or practices.