

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## Scope:

The purpose of this policy is to outline to our school community Sandringham East Primary School's policy requirements for use of social media in relation to the school. This policy applies to staff, parents/carers and other members of the school and wider community whom are of legal age to be utilising the specific social media platform/s authorised by the school. This policy does not cover student use of social media or digital technologies. This policy does not cover use of social media by the school community or wider community for personal or professional purposes not relating to the school. The use of the term 'social media' in this policy refers to internet-based online social media communication sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

## Rationale:

- It is necessary that our school, including staff, parents/carers, relatives, and the wider community, engage in respectful interactions online and in social media communications safely and responsibly.
- Official school social media falls within the scope of the Community Partnerships Sub-committee of Sandringham East Primary School's School Council.
- At the time of this policy's endorsement, the school operates one official school-moderated Facebook page. **The Facebook page 'Sandringham East Primary School' is the sole official social media page moderated by the school.**
- The school's name and community is associated with a number of unofficial, non-school-endorsed community-moderated networks.
- Social media sites provide powerful opportunities for individuals to connect with others throughout the world, but at the same time, can expose the unwary to hazards and dangers that users must proactively avoid.
- A right to privacy and respect are paramount when considering internet use and social networking. This includes the maintenance of confidentiality, with protection of information as a core responsibility of the school.
- It is essential that members of the school community communicate information in line with the established protocols so as to preserve the professionalism of the school, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students, and to comply with departmental and legal requirements.

## Aims:

- For all adults within our school community to respect the safety, privacy and security of others when engaging online in social media networking, particularly where the school, its students or other members of the school community including staff may be referenced.
- To ensure that confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations.

## Implementation:

### **School endorsement and guidelines**

- Social media use of an official school-endorsed nature must be approved by the school principal or their nominee(s). Currently this is limited to one (1) official Sandringham East Primary School Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057251718542>)
- Protocols and/or guidelines (see appendices for examples only) for parent involvement with social media:
  - must be defined and communicated when a platform/application is established for use by the school
  - should be communicated on a regular basis across the period that a platform/application is used
  - should be explicit about what type of behaviour is not acceptable and what actions will be taken if the rules are broken
- Relevant groups will be consulted in the development of abovementioned protocols/guidelines, for example the Community Partnerships Subcommittee regarding the school's official Facebook page
- Where the platform/application allows it, at least 2 staff members should have administrative rights to any social media page or group, along with at least 2 members of the parent community. Each administrator should have their own login to the platform. Where the platform does not allow multiple individual administrators, and a shared administrative login is required, the password must be changed when an administrator leaves the role and/or platform/application. If a staff member leaves the school (e.g. moves to another school or leaves the profession), administrative rights to the account must be removed for that staff member or the account deleted. Likewise for when a parent administrator is no longer associated with the school, for example their youngest child transitions to secondary school.

### **Use and moderation of social media sites by staff**

- SEPS will use the verified Facebook page to communicate with our school community, including promoting school events, achievements and happenings.
- At least two (2) staff members will have authorised access to the school's official Facebook page. This is to be determined by the principal.
- At least two (2) members of the parent community, to be limited to members of the Community Partnerships Subcommittee and/or as determined by the principal, will have authorised access to the school's official Facebook page.
- Those authorised with administrative rights will have the ability to moderate content, including reporting and/or deleting content deemed in breach of our guidelines.
- Those authorised with administrative rights will be the only people with the ability to initiate new content/posts on the platform.
- Privacy settings implemented on the SEPS Facebook page will not allow others (e.g. followers) to initiate posts to our wall.
- In accordance with the Department's policy on social media, staff will not 'friend' or 'follow' students or parents on a personal social media account, or accept a 'friend' request from a student or parent using a personal social media account unless it is objectively appropriate, for example where the student is also a family member of the staff. The principal is responsible for determining what is objectively appropriate in such

circumstances, but may seek advice from Employee Conduct Branch on [\(03\) 7022 0005](tel:0370220005) or [employee.conduct@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:employee.conduct@edumail.vic.gov.au)

- Staff members may engage in social media use which aligns to their professional duties, for example liking, sharing or commenting on a post on the school's Facebook page.
- Staff members may, at their discretion, interact with the school's social media profiles, though should be aware of the ability of community members to subsequently see their profiles and should ensure privacy settings are set accordingly.

### Overview of appropriate and acceptable behaviours on SEPS social media

- The school will ensure that the school community is aware of the DET and school values and expectations for appropriate behaviour on social media, and can help to prevent and manage conflict and ensure that community members are able to engage in a safe and respectful way.
- The school's social media platform moderators reserve the right to block, report or ban individuals at their discretion
- If a parent/carer behaves inappropriately towards staff on social media, schools should follow the [Occupational Violence and Aggression in Schools Policy and Procedure](#).
- When using social media relating to the school, users must consider the rights, privacy and confidentiality of all members of the school community, including students, staff, parents and families.
- Users must not post photos containing students or staff without consent. **The school's [Photography, Filming and Recording Students Policy](#) applies in all circumstances and is to be read in conjunction with this policy.**
- When the school publishes photos depicting students to the SEPS Facebook page, the school will have written permission from the parent/carer of the student/s depicted inline with the abovementioned policy.
- **Parents/carers and the wider community will not post/publish photographs of children other than their own.**
- For each school-endorsed social media platform, the school will develop, promote and implement protocols/guidelines specific to that platform.

### Education and student use of social media

- Students, parents/carers and staff should be informed of and **abide by the legal age** for the use of social media sites with age restrictions. A comprehensive list of age restricted sites/apps can be found at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/games-apps-and-social-networking>, though users must inform themselves of the minimum age requirements via the platforms' terms and conditions.
- Students must not use a social media website/app if they do not meet the minimum age for that platform.
- Parents/carers must ensure their children are not using websites/apps for which they do not meet the minimum age requirement.
- At the time of writing this policy, the use of Facebook is restricted to those 13+ years of age.
- The school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to be educated on cyber-safety, including use of social media, such as through articles in the school newsletter and information sessions with professional experts such as Susan McLean, as well as the information session for Level 2 parents in relation to school devices. The school will support parents/carers to:
  - understand the minimum age required for a variety of commonly-used websites/apps

- be able to support and guide students to delete accounts where they are not meeting the legal requirement of the website/app
- be informed about the potential dangers of online social media and internet use generally
- gain experiences in identifying and eliminating potentially dangerous or illegal behaviour online.
- The school will not use, or encourage the use of, social media for students below the minimum age required for that website/app.
- The school will provide opportunities for students to be educated on cyber-safety, including use of social media, such as through classroom-based lessons and incursions with professional experts such as Susan McLean. The school will support students to:
  - understand the minimum age required for a variety of commonly-used websites/apps
  - be informed about the potential dangers of online social media and internet use generally
  - gain experiences in identifying and eliminating potentially dangerous or illegal behaviour online
  - learn the importance of protecting their identity, security and privacy online, as well as safe online communication.

For further information regarding student use of digital devices, including issues relating to cyberbullying, refer to the school's 'Digital Technologies Policy', '[Bullying Prevention Policy](#)', and 'Acceptable use Agreement'.

#### Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle.  
Ratified by School Council June 2021

#### Resources & links:

- Susan Mclean – [CyberSafety Solutions](#)
- [Bullying Prevention and Response](#)
- [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- [Decision Making Responsibilities for Students](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [eduPass – Identity and Access Management in Schools](#)
- [Information Security – InfoSafe](#)
- [Intellectual Property and Copyright](#)
- [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#)
- [Occupational Violence and Aggression in Schools](#)
- [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students -   
\[http://www.sandringhameastps.vic.edu.au/docs/Policy\\\_Phographing%20Filming%20and%20Recording%20Students%20Aug%202020-2024.pdf\]\(http://www.sandringhameastps.vic.edu.au/docs/Policy\_Phographing%20Filming%20and%20Recording%20Students%20Aug%202020-2024.pdf\)](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- Digital Technologies Policy (available on the school website and by request to the Principal)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)  
[http://www.sandringhameastps.vic.edu.au/docs/Policy\\_Bullying%20Prevention.pdf](http://www.sandringhameastps.vic.edu.au/docs/Policy_Bullying%20Prevention.pdf)
- SEPS Acceptable Use Agreement (available from the school office)

## Appendices:

- EXAMPLE School Facebook page guidelines
- EXAMPLE Class WhatsApp group guidelines

### 1) EXAMPLE School Facebook page guidelines:

#### Introduction:

Our intent is to grow our school and community's understanding of social media and to make connecting with our school more convenient. We wish our content to be more accessible and to also tap into the knowledge and support base of our parent community. Our school's Facebook page allows our community to keep up-to-date with activities through a medium preferred by many. Overwhelmingly, our Facebook page is a place where we build our community by amplifying our school spirit. We ask that our community accentuate the positives and bring to everyone's attention the little things that make our school community great.

#### Guidelines:

- **Using Real Names**

All users interacting with the Sandringham East Primary School (SEPS) Facebook page, by either liking or commenting on posts must do so using a Facebook account that clearly identifies them by their real name.

- **Raising Issues**

The SEPS Facebook page is not an appropriate space to raise an issue or submit complaints. The 'Messenger' aspect of the Facebook page is unmonitored. Issues involving any of the students or staff must not be raised in the Facebook page and should follow the school's regular processes. We will not support interactions that incite or fuel overly negative sentiments.

- **When can I use names in posts**

You can use names in posts/comments when you wish to acknowledge someone's great work or community contribution. This includes staff, parents and students with parent permission. We wish our Facebook page to be used to build spirit; patting someone on the back publicly goes a long way to building the school we all aspire to.

- **How to Interact with the Facebook Page**

Users will be able to comment on the school's postings and on comments by other users, but cannot create posts. Users will also be able to 'like' a post or comment by clicking on the like button. Users will not be able to author a posting of their own or load media such as video or photos, although can add within the comments section of relevant posts provided such posts adhere to our policies. User rights will be reviewed over time..

#### Summary:

Our Facebook page is intended as an online community hub in which the school, and its parents, staff and students can be celebrated. The platform can promote our school's events and happenings to our existing community, prospective families and wider community. As such, it is essential that all online interactions reinforce our school's values, particularly with regards to respect.

#### Links:

(Include link and details of relevant school policies inc Social media and Photographing students etc)

## 2) EXAMPLE Class WhatsApp group guidelines:

### Introduction:

The PFA Class Reps have set up class WhatsApp groups for parents and carers to stay connected and share information about what's happening at the school. It is imperative that this is positive and provide parents with an opportunity to receive information quickly, efficiently and respectfully. Please remember that all official messages from SEPS will be communicated through the newsletter, Compass and/or website. The WhatsApp group is run by the parents and should not replace official communication channels. These groups work best when parents post respectful messages and questions that are relevant to school activities and important dates.

### Guidelines:

- Keep communication here to the essentials and/or school-related content rather than casual chatter, which can result in a huge amount of messages that can dilute otherwise important information. Users must remember to always keep communications respectful and reflect our school's values.
- A person who repeatedly posts inappropriate content and ignores warnings from the class convener will be removed from the group.
- Please feel free to ask questions about school business such as events, sports days, movie nights and after-school activities. But if you have a problem or a concern you should contact your child's teacher or school principal in the first instance.
- Please feel free to post birthday invitations to the whole class, but RSVP'S should be sent to the individual organiser, not to the whole group.
- Topics for discussion might include questions about school business such as events, sports days, lost property, movie nights, and after-school activities.
- Before posting a question to the entire group, consider if the question is worth posting. Is it really necessary to ask 20 + people, or maybe you could just ask your child's teacher, the school or another parent/Class Rep direction.
- Please do not feel that you have to reply to every comment or post as this again, swamps the important information and become irritating for many other parents.
- The WhatsApp group is not the place for raising issues or concerns about the school or staff, nor the place for 'gossip', arguments or criticism.
- Consider the timing of your messages as others may be in the middle of a busy work day or trying to get their kids into bed in the evening. WhatsApp messages can be distracting so please be mindful of when you choose to post a message to the group.

### Summary:

It is important to work as a community, respect and care about another. WhatsApp groups are commonly organised and set up for parents and carers to stay connected and share information about what's happening at the school, and organise events outside of school with the class and/or other parents/carers. We ask that parents keep the messaging positive and hope that these groups provide parents with an opportunity to receive information quickly, efficiently and respectfully, whilst staying connected with the class's parent/carer community.

Clarifications and accurate messaging should be the focus always. Any queries should be directed to the school principal.

### Links:

(Include link and details of relevant school policies inc Social media and Photographing students etc)