SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
Boroondara Park Primary School

PURPOSE

To ensure that Boroondara Park Primary School appropriately engages in a variety of online services and tools to support their remote and flexible learning programs responsibly.

POLICY

This policy outlines the requirements for the use of social media by school-based staff to support student learning. It does not cover:

- personal use of social media by school-based staff, excepting where use relates to students, or
- professional use of social media by schools for communication/promotional purposes

(Refer to Code of Conduct for further information).

SUMMARY

- Social media may be used by staff to support student learning if there is an appropriate educational purpose.
- Social media use must be planned, be reflected in school-based curriculum documents, and be approved by the school principal or their nominee(s).
- Staff use of social media to support student learning must be consistent with the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community.
- Social media use must in all cases comply with relevant legislation and Department policies, including in relation to staff conduct, privacy, copyright, information security and child safety.
- Any social media student activity visible to the public must not proceed without consent. This extends to sharing with parents.
- Staff must not interact with students using personal social media accounts unless it is objectively appropropriate.

DETAILS

Social media may be used by staff to support student learning if there is an appropriate educational purpose — this means that social media use:

- is directly related to achieving the learning outcomes defined in Victorian curriculum frameworks, and
- offers benefits for student learning that may not be able to be met in face-to-face contexts or through the use of other technologies

Note: examples of social media use supporting student learning are provided on the Department of Education and Training website (https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/social-media/guidance).

Social media use must be planned and be reflected in school-based curriculum documents (for example, a learning area/level plan, a unit of work/learning sequence).

Social media use must be approved by the school principal or their nominee(s). Nominees may include a curriculum or level leader who approves social media use when they review curriculum planning documents as part of their usual practice.

Staff use of social media to support student learning must be consistent with the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of them by their colleagues and the community, as outlined in any relevant codes of conducts, or local school or Department policies, including Part 11 of Ministerial Order 1038 (Conduct and Duties), the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees, the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and, for teachers, the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

Social media use must in all cases comply with relevant legislation and Department policies, including in relation to staff conduct, privacy, copyright, information security and child safety. This includes:

- ensuring that there is parent/carer notification or consent to their child's use of social media, and that social media use is age-appropriate (for example, platforms/applications that are rated 13+ are not used with primary-school-aged children) — refer to Parent/carer notification or consent for student use of social media, below, for further information
- ensuring that material sourced or created by staff that includes non-original or third-party content that is copied under licences or exceptions apply to education institutions are not visible to the public

Note that Department-provided online tools for collaboration and learning are available as part of the Software for Schools program and are configured to be compliant with legislation and Departmental policies. These technologies should be used in preference to social media platforms and applications where appropriate.

Where possible, social media accounts that support student learning must use Department/school credentialing (for example, Department/school email address), rather than personal credentialing (for example, home email address).

- Note that some social media platforms/applications only allow users to have one personal account (i.e. there is no mechanism for staff or students to use Department/school credentialing). Staff should avoid using such platforms/applications if an alternative platform/application can be used in its place that allows users to create a social media account with Department/school credentialing.

Staff must not:

- 'friend' or accept a 'friend' request from a student on/using a personal social media account
- 'follow' a student on/using a personal social media account

unless it is objectively appropriate, for example where the student is also a family member of the staff member.

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 or employee.conduct@edumail.vic.gov.au.

If a staff member becomes aware that a student at the school is 'following' them on a personal social media account (where 'following' an account does not require permission from the account holder), the staff member must ask the student to 'unfollow' them, and notify the school and/or parent/carer if the student does not do so.

In supporting student learning, staff should avoid using public social media platforms/applications (for example and not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok), unless there is a specific educational need for the use of an online public forum.

Where the platform/application allows it, at least 2 staff members should have administrative rights to any social media page or group. 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.

Students should be actively involved in the decisions about which social media websites and applications are used, and how they are used. This acknowledges that students have unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling, and should have the opportunity to actively shape their own education.

Parent/carer notification or consent for student use of social media

Any student social media activity visible to the public requires parents/carers to be notified and given an opportunity to 'opt out' of the proposed social media use.

Any student social media activity visible to the public must not proceed without consent. This extends to sharing with parents.

In some instances, a student may wish to make their own decisions about the use of their personal information to access social media. In this situation, schools should refer to the Department's Decision Making Responsibilities for Students and Mature Minors and Decision Making policies (https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/decision-making-responsibilities-students/policy).

Protocols for student use of social media

Protocols for use of social media:

- must be defined when a platform/application is used for the first time with students
- should be developed with input from students
- 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. Such protocols are usually articulated in a school's:
  - Acceptable Use Agreements for the use of digital technologies
  - Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- should be explicitly modelled, encouraged and scaffolded by staff

Interactions between students on social media must be actively and regularly monitored and the platform/application closed when not in use.

Note: example protocols for student and staff use of social media to support student learning are provided on the Department of Education and Training website (https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/social-media/resources).

Use of social media by parents/carers

Under some circumstances, it may be appropriate to invite parents/carers to view/comment on social media content (for example, a class blog) created to support student learning. In such circumstances, security and privacy controls must be put in place to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and Department policies. In particular, staff must ensure that parent/carer involvement with their child's learning does not provide them with opportunities to connect/engage with other people's children on social media platforms/applications used by the school.

Protocols for parent involvement with social media:

- must be defined and communicated when a platform/application is used for the first time with parents
- 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

Parent/carers should have the opportunity to provide input into the development of parent/carers social media protocols.

Note: examples of protocols for parent/carer use of social media to support student learning are provided on the Department of Education and Training website in the Resources tab (https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/social-media/resources).

Responding to challenging behaviour by parents/carers

If a parent/carer behaves inappropriately towards staff on social media, the school will follow the Occupational Violence and Aggression in Schools Policy and Procedure (https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-violence-and-aggression-schools/policy).

DEFINITIONS

Social media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Social media may include:

- social networking sites (for example, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- video and photo sharing websites (for example, Flickr, Youtube)
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs (for example, WordPress, EduBlogs)
- micro-blogging (for example, Twitter)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (for example, Whirlpool)
- wikis (for example, PBWorks, WordPress)

- instant messaging (for example, Whatsapp)

Social media functions may be included as part of a larger learning platform (for example, G Suite for Education, Microsoft 365).

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 23 April, 2021 and is scheduled for review in April, 2022.