

Dorset Primary School No.5132

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

BROAD AIMS

- To ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of all members of the Dorset PS community using social media.
- To inform members of the Dorset PS community about the use of social media as it relates to the school community.
- To prevent and avoid damage to the reputation of the school, including students or staff, caused by irresponsible or unauthorised use of social media.

CONTEXT

'Social Media' is an umbrella term used to describe a range of internet-based communication platforms including but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo sharing web sites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube)
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs (e.g. Tumblr)
- Micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter)
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Facebook groups, WhatsApp, Messenger group chats)
- Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. Roblox, World of Warcraft, Second Life, Fortnite)
- Vod and podcasts
- Video conferences and web conferences (e.g. Zoom, Webex, MS Teams)
- E-mail and Instant Messaging (including Facebook Messenger)

'Social media' also includes all other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

In this policy, the term 'Dorset PS community' describes all current and former students, staff, volunteers, parents and related community members.

GUIDELINES

Responsibilities

- All students, parents and staff are personally responsible for any content they post online using social media sites or other electronic communications.
- Parents are obligated to monitor their children's use of social media outside school and to ensure that their children adhere to relevant user agreements for social media platforms, including minimum age requirements.
- DET employees are obligated to make themselves aware of DET guidelines on social media use, including when guidelines are updated.

Acceptable Use

Misuse of social media may involve:

- A breach of employment obligations

- Serious misconduct
- Sexual harassment
- Unlawful discrimination
- A criminal offence (see below)
- A threat to the security of DET ICT resources
- An infringement of the privacy of staff and other persons such as students or parents, or
- Exposure to legal liability.

This will be regarded as a serious matter and appropriate restorative and disciplinary action may be taken. Where there is a reasonable belief that illegal activity may have occurred the Department may report the suspected illegal activity to the police.

Offences and criminal charges

Various Victorian and Commonwealth legislation create criminal offences for the misuse of social media. Some such offences include the following:

1. Menace, harass or cause offence

It is a criminal offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Commonwealth) to use a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence.

2. Child pornography

It is a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) to print, produce, possess or procure child pornography. Child pornography is defined as any film, photograph, publication or computer game that describes or depicts a person who is under 18 years of age engaging in sexual activity or depicted in an indecent sexual manner. It is also a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) to invite or procure a person who is under 18 years of age to be in any way concerned in a sexual performance. Although these criminal offences were created to protect young people from predatory adults, young people may well commit such offence by engaging in practices such as 'sexting'. Any instances involving these actions should immediately be reported to the Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (SOCA) Unit and a report made to the [Emergency & Security Management Unit](#) on (03) 9603 7999 (24-hours).

3. Stalking

Stalking is a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). Stalking occurs where an offender engages in a course of conduct with the intention of causing physical or mental harm to another person, or arousing apprehension or fear in that other person; and the course of conduct has that result. Examples of stalking include:

- Following the victim (including through electronic means)
- Contacting the victim by telephone, text message, email or other electronic communication
- Publishing on the internet or by an email or other electronic communication a statement or other material relating to the victim or statement or material purporting to originate from the victim
- Causing an unauthorised computer function in a computer owned or used by the victim
- Entering or loitering outside or near the victim's place of residence or of business or any other place frequented by the victim

- Giving offensive material to the victim, leaving it where it will be found by, given to or brought to the attention of, the victim (including through electronic means)
- Keeping the victim or any other person under surveillance.

4. Defamation

If an individual publishes information that identifies a person; and the published content lowers the person's standing, brings that person into hatred, ridicule or contempt, or causes others to shun or avoid that person; the employee who published the information may find themselves personally defending an action of defamation.

5. Copyright

Copyright is the legal protection of literary, dramatic, artistic, and musical works, sound recordings and performances. It provides creators with the legal right to control the use of their creations. Publishing such works without the requisite permissions from the creator(s) may amount to a breach of the Copyright Act 1968.

In the event of unacceptable use or misuse of social media related to any current or former staff, students or parents within the school community, Dorset PS may:

- Notify parents/carers of misuse.
- Attempt to restore relationships between affected individuals with a restorative conference.
- Remove privileges from students who have demonstrated unacceptable use of social media.
- Notify external parties of unacceptable online conduct.
- Keep records of such cases.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on June 2020 and is scheduled for review in June 2021.