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# BUNGAREE PARISH SCHOOLS Social Media Policy

Ratified: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Review: June 2020

## Rationale

The communities of the Bungaree Parish Schools understand that Social Media can be a powerful tool that enables staff, parents and students to communicate with each other in an empowering and innovative way. The Bungaree Parish Schools do however, expect that staff, parents' and students' online behaviour reflects the same values outlined in the Schools Vision and Mission document and in documents such as Parent-School Relationships Code of Conduct, Safe School Policy, Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy, Pastoral Care Policy - Student Welfare, Complaints Policy, Behaviour Management and Student Leadership Policy.

## Scope

**This policy applies to all full and part time staff members, casual relief teachers, volunteers, parents/guardians/carers, students, contractors and others engaged by the school.**

## Social Media Usage

**Staff members at Bungaree Parish Schools are required to act in a respectful and professional manner at all times when accessing school computers, the internet and social networking sites.**

To ensure that staff members, parents/guardians/carers, students and others engaged by the school understand their responsibility when using this medium, Bungaree Parish Schools have developed the following policies/protocols.

1. Social networking sites **including, but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn or Snapchat** must not be used as a platform for learning activities with students.
2. Staff members should not accept current students as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites.
3. Staff members must show discretion when accepting current parents as 'friends' on their own social network and interact with parents according to this policy.
4. Staff members are asked to use professional discretion before accepting ex-students and parents as 'friends' on any platform in social media.
5. Staff members and parents/guardians/carers must not discuss students, or criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
6. Staff members must not post images that include students on social networking sites.
7. Parents/guardians/carers and students must not post images that include any staff and other students on social networking sites.
8. Parents/guardians/carers and students must not make comment, directly or indirectly, about any staff or other students on social networking sites.
9. Parents and Carers should be reminded that the minimum age of use for social media sites is 13 and above.

10. A responsible use of Social Media is a condition of enrolment at the Bungaree Parish Schools. There is an inherent understanding and expectation that parents/guardians/carers will always be respectful and protective of the name and reputation of our schools.
11. Grievances will be handled as stipulated in the Grievance and Complaints Policy and not by Social Media.

## **Maintaining Respectful, Responsible and Resilient use of Social Media and Christian Values**

**To maintain respectful, responsible and resilient use of social media, staff members, parents, guardians, carers and students must:**

1. **Determine whether a particular posting could place the school's professionalism and integrity at risk. Users should only post items and comments that they are happy for everyone else to see, regardless of privacy settings.**
2. **Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.**
3. **Not impersonate or falsely represent another person or institution.**
4. **Not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, inappropriate or libellous.**
5. **Not use social media to communicate personal grievance to others.**
6. **Not post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic or incites violence against others.**
7. **Not use obscene language towards others, make derogatory remarks, exaggerations, legal conclusions and characterisations.**
8. **Discuss with personal friends the need for discretion when they post information or images that include a staff member, parent or student on their own social networking pages.**
  - a. **It should be explained that once the material is posted it is identifiable, unretractable and unmanageable. Once an item is posted, it cannot be retracted; it is always 'in cyberspace'.**
9. **Maintain sole control of security and access to their personal pages and information.**
10. **The school strongly recommends that profile security and privacy settings are**
  - a. **set to 'Friends only'. Do not use 'Friends of Friends' and 'Network of Friends' settings as these open the social networking pages to a large group of unknown people.**

## **Breaches of this Policy**

A breach of this policy may also involve a breach of other policies such as:

- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Safe School Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Parent School Relationships Code of Conduct
- Anti- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Network User Agreement signed by all students each school year
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Student Welfare Policy
- Student Leadership Policy

Any breach of this policy will be considered by the Principal will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated and may result in a notification to the Police where the school is legally obligated to do so.

**Staff members are reminded that their personal social networking must be consistent with the professional standards, as outlined by the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct - VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) accreditation expected of them as a staff member at the Bungaree Parish Schools.**