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**DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL**

# STAFF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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# **Preamble**

All members of the school community, staff, students and parents are increasingly using digital technologies for professional purposes (i.e. teaching and learning) and personal purposes (i.e. communicating, creating and socialising) thus challenging the traditional concept of learning in a school setting.

It is important to note that

* While the digital world presents unlimited opportunities there are also some risks that need to be considered. Participating in social media is subject to the same standards of behaviour as those that apply when working with young people in the formal school setting.
* Staff who are interested in using social media tools to engage children and young people must have a clear educational context to support the teaching and learning.
* Staff have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect students from any harm that should have reasonably been foreseen and against which preventive measures could be taken.

# **Social Media**

Social media is the term used for internet based tools for sharing and discussing information among people. Additional social media tools may include (although are not limited to):

* Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat)
* Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, Youtube)
* Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs, micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter)
* Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool) Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia)
* Vod and podcasts
* Video conferences and web conferences
* Email and instant messaging
* All other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

# **Examples of Acceptable Use of Social Media for Staff**

The following examples demonstrate social media tools being used appropriately with a clear educational context:

* A philosophy teacher sends a weekly thought provoking question to use as a stimulus for a class discussion (Via Twitter)
* A principal reminds students of upcoming events at school such as ‘at this week’s assembly we will announce the school captains and SRC nominees.’ (Via Twitter)
* An English teacher establishes a collaborative forum (set up for professional use only) to discuss issues or share ideas (Via Edmodo)
* A teacher asks her students to brainstorm their expectations for using a blog, including rules for online behaviour, giving feedback and the key elements of the post e.g. spelling, punctuation, accuracy of information, etc (Via Padlet or Global2.vic.edu.au)
* A principal establishes a ‘group’ for teachers to share professional learning opportunities, current research documents, meeting times and dates and reminders (Via a Ning)
* A humanities teacher tweets snippets of current events (relevant to the humanities curriculum) and shares links to key websites for more information. (Via Edmodo or Twitter)
* A class is assigned the task of designing and creating an interactive digital poster that demonstrates the students’ knowledge, ideas and opinions of a particular subject under study (Via Glogster).

# Examples of Unacceptable Use of Social Media for Staff

* Defining an official Dandenong High School social media account without the express written permission of the Principal
* Instigating or participating in ‘chats’ of a personal nature with students or parents via instant messaging
* Contacting parents regarding any matter via social media tools. All official communication to parents should be done by House Leadership Teams, using phone or email only.
* Instigating or participating in offensive or slanderous ‘chats’ regarding the school, a colleague (past or present), student (past or present) or parent (past or present) via DET instant messaging systems
* Contacting a student via written or electronic means including email, text messages without a valid educational context
* Using your DET email address for casual and personal emails that may be deemed as pornographic or offensive
* Adding or accepting a student to a personal social networking site as a ‘friend’
* Downloading copyright protected content (images, music, etc) using any DET ICT system
* Using a DET email address to subscribe to web-based applications that are not for educational purposes
* School staff do not deliberately access sites that do not have a valid educational purpose when using school owned devices which can now include staff laptops, smart phones, netbooks, desktops, iPads, tablets etc.
* School staff who accidentally access inappropriate sites that are not educational when using school owned devices should notify their IT Manager and leadership team to establish whether further action is required to block access to the content or erase the history.

**School staff must not:**

* share content from their personal social media site with students.
* post images of themselves on social media sites that have the potential to negatively affect their reputation.
* express personal opinions or make judgements regarding work or post-work related issues (regarding the workplace or colleagues) on a social media site or blog.
* email a personal opinion regarding DET policies to a newspaper website via a DET email system (e.g. Edumail).
* reveal personal and/or political opinions/bias on a social networking site using a network and/or computer owned or leased by the DET (Staff laptops are school owned)
* establish a social networking site for discussion of sensitive issues.
* post photos or messages of a sexual or offensive nature in an open forum.
* store any images in online storage spaces without applying the necessary privacy settings.
* allow students who are under the defined age to register for a social media tool where the terms and conditions require them to be that defined age.
* misrepresent themselves on a social media site.

# **Expectations regarding social media use for Dandenong High School staff:**

As a professional working at DHS, all staff are expected to act in a manner that reflects their standing in the community; that of a respectful and responsible citizen. It is imperative that staff always reflect on how they conduct themselves online.

**Staff need to ask themselves whether what they are about to post could cause offence to anyone or be thought inappropriate or bring the school into disrepute, because teachers are held to higher standards than most members of the public. If the answer is yes, or staff are not sure, then staff do not make the post.**

As part of staff responsibilities in meeting school expectations regarding the use of social media, all staff need to ensure the points on the next page are closely adhered to.

* Before uploading photos, visual images or videos of students on an online space, specific written permission should be sought from the student or their parents / guardians using the relevant permission form as found on the DET website. **The School’s standard release form is not adequate for this purpose, as it only covers normal school operations or publications.**
* Staff should seek the consent of parents/guardians for students to participate and register to use social media tools.
* Staff will be required to gain parent / guardian consent to upload information, images and videos of the students. This is very important as a failure to obtain this consent may amount to a breach of privacy.
* If staff decide to use a social media tool for classroom/professional use then it is recommended that staff create a completely separate online space for this purpose. This online space should be treated with the same professionalism as is displayed at school. All correspondence and content that is uploaded must have a clear educational context/purpose.
* Consider whether staff need specific permission to upload content. Content may have copyright protection or may require specific permission before it can be uploaded.
* Privacy options and settings are extremely useful to protect online identity and professional reputation but they are not fool proof. These settings can be changed by the owners of the tool who do not always have an obligation to inform their users. The best way to maintain your professional image is to manage your profile professionally and regularly check for updates to Terms and Conditions that may occur. When using social media tools it is prudent to err on the side of caution.
* Expected behaviours for IT use are outlined and communicated to students and their families within the school’s *Acceptable Use Agreement*. These include appropriate language and behaviours and the consequences for behaving inappropriately. It is essential that these same rules are understood for the online classroom/professional space.
* Staff should consider the content they upload or view and whether it reflects the professional image of staff and how you wish to be perceived by others.
* Staff should consider whether the content is detrimental to the standing of staff and the school in the community.
* Staff should consider whether friends or others can upload content to that staff member’s social media site that may adversely affect the reputation of staff or the school
* Staff should consider whether their personal information could potentially be copied from their social media site and shared with a wider audience.
* When setting up or subscribing to groups, staff should keep in mind their professional status and how these groups may or may not uphold your professional image.
* It is important to note the history of reading and viewing activity may be highlighted and shared on personal profiles staff have set up on social media. Staff should consider how your professional image could be protected by using the privacy and filtering options that are available within the particular social media tool being utilised by staff.
* Staff are able to use cloud-based storage such as Google Drive and Dropbox as part of completing school-related tasks. However, staff should be aware that if they receive inappropriate materials via cloud-based storage services, then they should follow the procedures under “A Step-by-Step Guide for Removing Inappropriate Content from a Website, Facebook or other Social Media Site” attached to this policy, and inform the Executive Leadership Team of the incident without delay.

# **Misuse and Legal Consequences**

If you use the school’s computer systems, school owned laptops or other electronic devices for personal use the school reserves the right to monitor such use including use of the internet and personal use of social media.

Unauthorised or inappropriate use during working hours will result in disciplinary action.

Misuse of social media may involve:

1. a breach of employment obligations
2. serious misconduct
3. sexual harassment
4. unlawful discrimination
5. a criminal offence, including
   1. Menacing, harassing or causing offence
   2. Child pornography
   3. Stalking
   4. Defamation
   5. Copyright
6. a threat to the security of Department ICT resources
7. an infringement of the privacy of staff and other persons such as students or parents, or
8. exposure to legal liability.

**Evaluation: This Policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year review cycle.**

**School Council Endorsement date: 21st May 2019**







*Adapted from* [*http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/socialmedia.aspx*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/socialmedia.aspx)