



# Staff Social Media Policy

March 2019

<b>Date Approved</b>	28/03/2019	<b>Number of pages</b>	5
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<b>Reviewed by</b>	Executive	<b>Date for next review</b>	April 2021

## 1 RATIONALE

As the Australian Curriculum specifies “Communicating with ICT”, via conduits including those classified as social media, as an expected skill for students across the curriculum, teaching staff should be expected to be conversant in the use and appropriate application of social media contexts.

With this in mind, Foundation Christian College has developed this Social Media Policy for Staff to ensure employee behaviour on Social Networks is responsible and acceptable by school and community standards.

## 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the College.

## 3 POLICY

- Foundation Christian College is to provide a safe (physical and emotional), caring, Christian environment.
- All staff, students and members of the College community need to positively contribute to the College culture so that the outcomes as stated in the rationale are achieved. The partnerships between parents and staff, staff and students and student and students are vital and open communication is essential.

### 3.1 Social media

#### 3.1.1 Defining social media

Social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Social media may be defined as, “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61)

There are various forms of social media and there are always new forms of social media being developed. Currently, the main forms of social media include, but are not limited to:

- **Social networking sites:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat
- **Video and photo sharing websites:** Content Communities such as Snapchat, Flickr, wessabe and YouTube;
- **Micro-blogging sites:** Twitter, Posterous, Dailybooth;
- **Blogs:** including corporate blogs and personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications;
- **Podcasts:** including corporate podcasts and personal podcasts;
- **Forums and discussion boards:** e.g. local discussion boards, Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups;
- **Virtual game worlds:** e.g. World of Warcraft, Fortnite
- **Virtual Social Worlds:** e.g. Second Life;
- **Online encyclopaedias:** e.g. Wikis such as Wikipedia, Geo-wiki, GeoNames and Sidewiki; and
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools, (together called **Social Media**).

#### 3.1.2 Relevant Legislation

The laws that apply in the ‘real world’ also apply in cyberspace.

Although there are a several benefits that social media can bring to both personal usage and school purposes, there are certain risks and implications that can arise. While Australian law has not entirely caught up with technology and there is no one specific piece of legislation that regulates social media sites and the use of social media, it is important to keep in mind that what employees and employers do with social media can have real world legal consequences.

Recent decisions by the Fair Work Commission have again confirmed that proof of excessive use or the inappropriate use of social media during or outside of work hours may constitute a valid reason for termination of employment. There have also been cases where the inappropriate use of social media against co-workers (such as harassment) outside of work hours has resulted in employees being dismissed for serious misconduct.

Acts and Regulations that may be associated with the use of social media may include but are not exclusive to:

- Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006
- Copyright Act, 1968
- Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000
- Copyright Amendment (Moral Rights) Act 2000
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Privacy Act 1988

- School Education Act 1999
- School Education Regulations 2000
- Teacher Registration Act 2012
- Teacher Registration (General) Regulations 2012
- Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979
- Telecommunications Act 1997.

### **3.1.3 Risks associated with online social media activity**

There are risks associated with the use of social media. These include but are not exclusive to:

- Breaches of the school's Code of Conduct for all employees at the College.
- Plagiarism or breach of copyright conditions when using or reproducing material.
- Using work-time to browse social media applications.
- Social media put to an inappropriate use.
- Employee comments inadvertently bringing the School's reputation into disrepute.
- Employees outlining personal political views whilst using their school contact.
- Employees, through the use of pseudonyms or 'avatars' representing themselves as someone else either within the school or outside of the school.
- Employees making promises or statements regarding the school's operations which are misleading.
- Employees disclosing personal information relating to school staff, students or parents or official information which is confidential or 'commercial-in-confidence'.

### **3.1.4 Staff guidelines for social media use**

As a general rule, communication must not occur with current students using a computer, personal or mobile phone or by any other electronic means unless it is justifiable and in an educationally valid context.

#### **3.1.4.1 Legitimate Use of Social Media in an educational context**

You have legitimate reasons to use communication technologies as part of teaching and learning programs such as:

- Communicating by email with parents and students about student assignments and progress. For this purpose, you should only use your College email address.
- Creating applications such as web pages and blogs as part of the teaching program. This should have prior written approval from your line manager.
- Studying social media as texts in learning areas such as English and Media Studies. This should have prior written approval from your line manager.

#### **3.1.4.2 Inappropriate Use of Social Media**

Inappropriate use includes, but is not be limited to:

- Conducting private business during working hours
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language in content

- Accessing, downloading or transmitting any kind of sexually explicit material, violent images including graphic images of blood or gore (without medical purpose)
- Accessing, downloading or transmitting information on the use and construction of weapons, explosives and other tools of violence or terrorism
- Accessing, downloading or transmitting any material deemed to be illegal under WA or Australian Commonwealth law
- Accessing, downloading or transmitting hate speeches and overt racism; material extolling the inherent or moral superiority or inferiority of a particular race, ethnic group, or sexual orientation, racial epithets, or religious bigotry
- Compromising the privacy of any person
- Using services for personal political purposes
- Using services for industrial campaigns
- Attempting to gain unauthorised access to the computing resources of other organisations.
- Disrupting the integrity of the school's data or information services
- Exchanging personal mobile phone numbers with students except under special sanctioned circumstances and only for the duration of that special circumstance
- Corresponding with students using personal email addresses e.g. Hotmail and Yahoo
- Engaging in any online communication with students of a personal nature
- Inviting, accepting or allowing current students to be 'friends' on your personal/private social networking sites, or 'following' current students on your personal/private social networking sites
- Inviting, accepting or allowing former FCC students under the age of 18 to be 'friends' on your personal/private social networking sites, or 'following' former FCC students under the age of 18 on your personal/private social networking sites
- Inviting, accepting or allowing the parents of current students to be 'friends or 'following' the parents of current students at FCC\*
- Taking photographs or videos of students without parent/guardian consent
- Taking photographs or videos of students for non-school purposes
- Sending or exchanging images or videos of school staff, students or any aspect of school operations without authorisation or approval
- Downloading and storing inappropriate images or other inappropriate material on College Ipads, computers or networks

*\* When the parent is also a teacher at the school or attends the church of the staff member, the staff member's professional judgement must be exercised*

In the event of a complaint or allegation being received by the College, the responsibility will be on the staff member to demonstrate that the use was appropriate and met your ethical, legal and any duty of care obligations.

These guidelines similarly apply to instances of staff to staff interaction or between staff and parents or other members of the community where risks exist on breaching confidential information requirements when using social media.

### **3.2 Social Media and Marketing**

FCC has a College Facebook page that is closed to the general public. Only staff and current parents may become members of this closed group. Any post to the FCC Facebook page must be approved by an administrator. The administrators of the FCC Facebook page are executive team members and College Media personnel.

All posts to this page must be positive and uplifting in nature, focussing on students, staff and events taking place at Foundation Christian College. These may include:

- Any College event
- Information about meetings – invitations, advice of outcomes

- College Board announcements
- “Warm Fuzzies”
- Students’ achievements
- Photographs or footage taken by class teachers
- General information to share from sporting, health, and other academic organisations.
- Newsletter links
- Positive Media Articles on FCC
- Student and staff accolades and achievements

Advertising on this site is limited to the promotion of future events taking place at the College or related to the College.

As a general guide, posts are approved by:

Primary Posts – Head of Primary School

Middle School – Head of Middle School

Senior School Posts – Head of Senior School

General College posts – Administration team

College Corporate Events – Media personnel

Foundation Friends Events – Media personnel

### **3.3 Conclusion**

When facing any ethical dilemma involving the use of social media, first consider the three-way test: Stop, Think, and Act.

#### **1. Stop**

- Am I feeling comfortable with the situation?
- Are my actions legal and consistent with policies?
- Am I doing the right thing?

#### **2. Think**

- How would others judge my actions?
- How could my actions impact on others?
- Would my action stand up to scrutiny by the College community or the public?
- Should I discuss this with someone else?

#### **3. Act**

- All things considered, what am I going to do?