

## COMMUNICATION, USE OF INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY - STAFF

### STAFF

#### RATIONALE

Communication, whether face to face, written or electronic is a vital part of St John's Lutheran School community. Positive and respectful communication is required between all stakeholders.

St John's Lutheran School realises that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of employees engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is an essential part of 21st century learning. Accordingly, appropriate engagement with, and modelling of technology use is the responsibility of all St John's Lutheran School employees. To this aim, St John's Lutheran School has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for employees when participating in online social media activities.

These Social Media guidelines encourage all St John's Lutheran School employees to:

Participate in online social activities;

Manage their own digital personas; and

Model good digital citizenship to students through demonstration of appropriate social media use.

It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by the persons to whom this Policy applies is a reflection on the entire St John's Lutheran School. Accordingly, by accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or any other Social Media space for classroom, St John's Lutheran School or personal use, employees agree to abide by these guidelines. Employees are requested to read these guidelines carefully before posting or commenting on any blog or creating any classroom blog, wiki and/or podcast.

**This policy applies to employee's personal use of Social Media platforms where the employee:**

- is identifiable as a St John's Lutheran School employee; or
- makes reference to St John's Lutheran School, the St John's Lutheran School's operations and/or any St John's Lutheran School related issue/s.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone (even private individuals) to publish or access information. Social Media may include (although is not limited to):

- ) social networking sites (eg Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer);
- ) video and photo sharing websites (eg Flickr, Youtube);
- ) blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- ) blogs hosted by media outlets (eg 'comments' or 'your say' feature on theage.com.au);
- ) micro-blogging (eg Twitter);
- ) wikis and online collaborations (eg Wikipedia);
- ) forums, discussion boards and groups (eg Google groups, Whirlpool);
- ) vod and podcasting;
- ) online multiplayer gaming platforms (eg World of Warcraft, Second life);
- ) electronic messaging (including SMS, email, and attachments such as letters, images);
- ) geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare).

## **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

### **PROFESSIONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

#### **OVERVIEW**

St John's Lutheran School employees are personally responsible for any content they publish on Social Media spaces. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By way of example, should a St John's Lutheran School staff member identify themselves as a Lutheran School employee on a Social Media space, that staff member would become connected to a range of other colleagues, students, parents and wider St John's Lutheran School community members online. As such, online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you would use face-to-face. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time.

# PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

## OVERVIEW

St John's Lutheran School recognises that employees may wish to use social media in their personal lives. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit employees' personal expression or online activities. However, employees should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to St John's Lutheran School via their personal use of Social Media when they can be identified as a St John's Lutheran School employee, or they make reference to St John's Lutheran School, St John's Lutheran School operations and/or St John's Lutheran School related issue/s. Accordingly, the following points are designed for employees' protection when using social media in such circumstances to ensure the risk of such damage is minimised:

St John's Lutheran School employees are personally responsible for all comments/information they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.

Your online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face, be in accordance with the Lutheran ethos and the highest professional Standards;

By posting your comments and having online conversations etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world. Be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings what you 'say' online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.

Comments related to St John's Lutheran School should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.

Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues and/or parents are concerned. No photographs of students of St John's Lutheran School (with the exception of an employee/s own children where approved by the relevant employee/s from time to time) are to be posted.

Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.

Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate.

Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and by that token an extension of your professional life and your classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall - is it really correct to put it online?

## **PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW (Cont.)**

Staff must not accept students as 'friends' on their social network sites or inter-act with students on social networking sites.

Staff are advised to use professional discretion before accepting ex-students or parents of current students as friends on their social network sites.

Microblogging (Twitter etc.) Comments made using such media are not protected by privacy settings. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and again refrain from any comment that could be deemed unprofessional. When using / contributing to a Social Media space/s in a personal capacity, employees are only authorised to comment on behalf of St John's Lutheran School in respect of matters approved by the Principal in writing. Similarly, employees must only comment in respect of such matters on Social Media accounts approved by the Principal in writing. When authorised to comment on behalf of St John's Lutheran School in a personal capacity, employees must follow the same guidelines that would apply to them if authorised to comment in their professional capacity.

### **Disclaimers**

Employees should include disclaimers within their Social Media sites that confirm the views are their own and do not reflect on their employer. For example:

*The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the positions, strategies, opinions or policies of St John's Lutheran School.* It is important to note this standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt St John's Lutheran School employees from a special responsibility when blogging.

## **GENERAL**

### **GUIDELINES – PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL USE**

#### **THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES APPLY TO BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:**

You must adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant Social Media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, child protection, discrimination, harassment, other applicable laws and the following St John's Lutheran School policies:

- ) ***ANTI-DISCRIMINATION/ HARASSMENT/ CHILD PROTECTION***
- ) ***ACCEPTABLE USE STATEMENT FOR COMPUTER NETWORK, E-MAIL & INTERNET.***
- ) ***PRIVACY POLICY***

Staff-student interaction on Social Media spaces must occur only in a professional and educational (i.e. not a personal) context;

You must ensure that you do not use or disclose any confidential information, post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;

Staff must not discuss students or co-workers or publicly criticise St John's Lutheran School policies or personnel on Social Media sites;

Ensure you do not make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to St John's Lutheran School's reputation or bring it into disrepute;

The St John's Lutheran School anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies apply to activities which are both online and in the physical workplace. Workplace bullying and harassment includes any bullying or harassing comments employees make online, even on their own private social networks or out of office hours;

If you come across positive or negative remarks about St John's Lutheran School and/ or its operations online that you believe are important, you may pass those posts to the Principal who will consider such comments on a case by case basis.

## **COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE**

### **COPYRIGHT, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND FAIR USE GUIDELINES MUST BE COMPLIED WITH AND RESPECTED.**

A hyperlink to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarise and give credit where it is due. When using a hyperlink, be sure that the content is appropriate and adheres to St John's Lutheran School policy.

It is recommended that blogs be licensed under a creative commons licence.

## **PROFILES AND IDENTITY**

Remember your association and responsibility with St John's Lutheran School in online social environments. For example, if you identify yourself as a St John's Lutheran School employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students. How you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.

No last names, St John's Lutheran School names, addresses or phone numbers should appear on blogs or wikis.

Be cautious how you setup online profiles, bios, avatars, etc. For example:

- ) when uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself, make sure you select a St John's Lutheran School appropriate image;
- ) adhere to Employee handbook guidelines as well as the St John's Lutheran School acceptable use policy;
- ) remember not to utilise protected images. Images should be available under Creative Commons or your own.

## **COMPLIANCE/ BREACH OF THIS POLICY**

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, child protection or criminal laws, discrimination, or some other contravention of the law.

Those who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment.

It is important to note that reports of cyber bullying and other technology abuses may result in a notification to the Policy or other relevant authority/ies where St John's Lutheran School is legally obliged to do so.

## **EMPLOYEES AUTHORISED TO COMMENT**

**St John's Lutheran School employees are authorised to comment on behalf of St John's Lutheran School in respect of matters approved by the Principal in writing. Similarly, employees must only comment in respect of such matters on Social Media accounts approved by the Principal in writing.**

**As is the case in respect of all other capacities in which employees may represent St John's Lutheran School, it is expected that appropriate personal and professional boundaries, and the demonstration of good digital citizenship will be maintained at all times when commenting on behalf of St John's Lutheran School in respect of matters approved by the Principal. i.e. School Facebook or Instagram page.**

### ***Once authorised to comment you must:***

Use only an official account or username created by St John's Lutheran School to post official comments;

Comment only on your area of expertise and authority and only on information considered to be for the public domain;

Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading; and

Ensure you are not the first to make an announcement (unless specifically given permission to do so).

### ***Disclaimers:***

Classroom blogs do not require a disclaimer, but teachers are encouraged to moderate content contributed by students.

### ***Accessibility – Student Content:***

**All interactions between employees and students via Social Media platforms must occur only in an educational context and be fully transparent (that is, readily accessible for viewing by the Principal /the Principal's nominee at all times). To this intent, employees are requested to provide, at the request of the Principal from time to time, a record of all password/ access codes used in respect of Social Media platforms by a student/s in the educational context.**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand what is expected of me in relation to the 'Communication, Use of Internet and Social Media Staff Policy' for St John's School.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Signed by Employee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Signed by Witness