

St John's Lutheran School Kingaroy

Communication, Use of Internet and Social Media Policy - Parents

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 life in the 21st century requires adapting to changing methods of communication and, as such, St John's Lutheran School has policies for appropriate communication, use of the internet and social media by staff and students. As part of the St John's Lutheran School community, parents of St John's Lutheran School also have a responsibility to communicate and engage appropriately when using the internet and social media that is linked to St John's Lutheran School. To this end, St John's Lutheran School has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for parents when participating in social media activities, e.g. classroom blogs, the St John's Lutheran School Facebook page, emails or any other social media platform/s used by parents in connection with St John's Lutheran School either directly, or indirectly in circumstances where St John's Lutheran School, a parent, staff member and/or student of St John's Lutheran School is involved.

St John's Lutheran School encourages parents to set and maintain high ethical standards in all forms of communication whether it be spoken, written or electronic. Be respectful of the opinions of others. Your posts and comments should help build and support the St John's Lutheran School community. Your online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face, and be in accordance with the Christian ethos of St John's Lutheran School.

Remember your role as a model for good citizenship to your children.

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

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines apply:

You must adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/ website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment, other applicable laws and St John's Lutheran School policies;

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;

Child protection protocols must always be observed;

Under no circumstances should disrespectful or offensive comments be made about students, parents or staff or the St John's Lutheran School in general by any means of communication. Parents are requested not to comment upon nor forward unsupported information, e.g. rumours concerning the St John's Lutheran School, or comment or post material that might otherwise cause damage to the St John's Lutheran School reputation or bring it into disrepute;

Be mindful that, by posting your comments and having online conversations etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world. Even with the strictest privacy settings be aware that 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;

The St John's Lutheran School Anti-bullying and Anti- harassment Statement applies to activities which are both online and in the physical workplace;

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

Keep in mind that St John's Lutheran School staff members are not required or obligated to make/accept invitations to/from parents to join social media/social networking sites, and parents should respect each individual staff member's personal preferences concerning their social networks. Likewise, parents are not required/should not feel obliged to accept a social media/social networking invitation from another St John's Lutheran School parent/s or from a St John's Lutheran School staff member/s;

Parents should never discuss sensitive St John's Lutheran School matters with staff or other parents using Facebook, blogs and other social media outlets. As noted above, when posting, even on the strictest privacy settings, parents should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain;

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;

If you don't get it right, be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make clear what you have done to fix it. Apologise if the situation warrants it. If it's a major mistake, e.g. reporting confidential information let someone know immediately so that St John's Lutheran School can take the proper steps to help minimize any impact it may have.

Communication procedures at St John's Lutheran school are set out in the School Handbook and on the website. If there are any misunderstandings from time to time, parents are encouraged to speak with staff to enable matters to be resolved in a positive way and communication processes are maintained.

COMPLIANCE/ BREACH OF THIS POLICY

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

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

Failure to comply with the policy by a parent may, in serious cases, put at risk the continuation of their child's enrolment at St John's Lutheran School (i.e. in serious cases, termination of the enrolment contractual agreement by St John's Lutheran School may result).