

School Expectations for Responsible Use of Social Media by all members of our College Community.

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Purpose

St Margaret Mary's College acknowledges that contemporary life requires adapting to ever changing methods of communication. The School has a policy for appropriate use of Mobile Telecommunication Devices.

The College recognises that access to technology gives students, parents and staff greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life and citizenship. We encourage teachers, students, staff, and other school community members to use social networking/media (Instagram, X, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) as a way to connect with others, share educational resources, create and curate educational content, and enhance the classroom experience.

St Margaret Mary's College is committed to assisting students develop 21st Century technology and communication skills that will keep them safe, and be cognisant of how easily a reputation can be tarnished by inappropriate behaviour online. To that end, the College expects that the staff and parents of the College will model appropriate use of social media.

St Margaret Mary's College has established the following set of expectations for Social Media use by students, parents and staff that provides guidelines and instructions on responsible behaviour, when using social media. While individuals do have the right to choose how they behave, there is often an impact on relationships at school, and sometimes, even on the reputation of the College, when staff, students or parents connected with the school, engage in behaviours that are negative, defamatory, threatening, bullying or facilitate gossip.

Whilst official school time operates between 8.35am – 3.05pm, social media use outside of school hours can also have a significant impact on the reputation of the College, its students, staff and families.

Rationale

St Margaret Mary's College accepts that many students have access to social media, via either mobile telecommunication devices or home desktop computers to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school.

However, because behaviours on social media can and do lead to disruptions to students' educational progress and can have a negative impact on individuals, the College is setting out expectations about ideal behaviours when engaging positively with social media.

Definition

Social Media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

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

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat);
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Tik Tok, YouTube, Flickr, Vimeo);
- Blogs, including business and personal blogs;
- Blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. 'comments' or 'your say' feature on theage.com.au)
- Micro-blogging (e.g. X)
- Wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups)
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. Fortnite, Among Us, World of Warcraft, Second life, Minecraft)
- Electronic messaging (including email and SMS)
- Geo-spatial tagging (e.g. in Snapchat)

The College recognises the evolving nature of this technology and reserves the right to determine on an individual basis whether the particular Social Media platform being used in a negative way is consistent with the purview of this Policy.

For a more detailed explanation please see Appendix 1.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students, staff and parents who utilise social media to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner while online and to consider the guidelines outlined in this document and the associated consequences.

Rights and Responsibilities:

Staff, students and parents are expected to show respect to all members of the school community.

- Staff will: Plan for the inclusion of cyber safety awareness within the curriculum with guidance from relevant education authorities.
- Parents will: Be responsible for being aware of and informed about their children's online activity and be proactive in the supervision and guidance of their children, taking into account this policy and in particular the school's core values.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The following guidelines relate to all members of the community, Students, Staff and Parents, when interacting online. As members of a Catholic learning community, we are urged to uphold the dignity and worth of all people.

- Online behaviour should at all times demonstrate a Christ-centred respect for the dignity of each person.
- Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- All community members should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the SMMC community and its members.
- Are aware of what they are posting online and that Social Media sites and applications are public forums.
- Do not post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic, or incites violence against others.
- Always respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Follow the Townsville Catholic Education Office code of conduct when writing online.
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another person (e.g. catfishing).
- Do not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others.
- Do not make defamatory comments about staff, students or parents.
- Do not use offensive or threatening language, or resort to personal abuse towards each other, or members of the school community
- Do not harm the reputation of St Margaret Mary's College or those within its community
- Do not upload video, audio or photographs of any member of the St Margaret Mary's community (student, parents or staff) without seeking and gaining appropriate permission.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

When using Social Media, students are expected to ensure that they:

- Read and agree to the terms and conditions of various Social media sites as many of them have age restrictions for their use. E.g. Facebook, Instagram and Gmail are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Are not permitted to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If students attempt to do this, the member of staff is to refuse the student access and inform the Principal. The student's parents will be informed if this happens.
- Will not access social networking sites during the school working day, unless permitted by a teacher for curriculum purposes (e.g.: education blogs, etc.)
- Remain safe online and never give out personal information. This includes last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birth dates and pictures.
- Do not upload any video or photographs of any student, or staff member, identified as a St Margaret Mary's student by their uniform or any other means, where it brings the College into disrepute.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS:

Classroom blogs and other Social Media tools open up communication between students, parents and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a large impact on learning at St Margaret Mary's College. The school encourages parents to participate in such activities when appropriate, but requests that parents act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be role modelling for their children as well.

Parents should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Be aware that many Social Media sites have age restrictions that DO HAVE implications for their daughters. Parents need to monitor their children's online social media activity, and read the terms and conditions of various Social Media sites and applications their daughters are interested in using. Parents need to be aware that many of them have age restrictions for their use. E.g. Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Parents need to be aware that they are in breach of terms and conditions if they set up a personal account for their daughters to use if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply.
- When at College events, parents need to seek appropriate permission from the College Leadership team before uploading photos, audio or video of any individual.
- Be conscious when using Social Media sites to not identify any child by name or associate them with a particular school.
- Parents will be asked to sign a consent form for students when teachers set up social media activities for classroom for learning use.
- Parents will not use classroom social media sites for any illegal activity, including violation of data privacy laws.
- Parents should not distribute or upload any information that might be deemed personal about other students participating in the social media activities. This includes photographs.
- Parents should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the SMMC community and its members – past or present.
- Parents assisting with classroom activities should not make use of social media sites while involved in such activities.
- Parents should respect that as part of the employing Staff Code of Conduct, staff are encouraged not to be 'friends' with parents or students on social media.

STAFF AND TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

Social Media in relation to staff and teacher relates to blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital images and video, instant messaging and mobile devices.

- Social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram must not be used by staff as a platform for learning activities with students.
- Staff should not accept students or parents of current students as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students or parents on social networking sites, other than the school Social Media.
- Staff and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.
- Staff are advised not to accept ex-students as friends on personal Social Media sites.

- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- While staff have permission to post photographs of students to the class blog they do not have permission to post details that would identify any child.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish online and should be mindful that what they publish will be public for a long time.
- Staff online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration consistent with the standards that apply on school premises and in accordance with the school's values and ethos.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the online world. If staff identify themselves online as affiliated with SMMC, then they need to be aware that they are by definition representing the entire school community.
- Staff should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school and the school's values and ethos. Staff are asked to consider whether their personal profile contradicts the ethos of the College (this includes topics they may 'like' or link to their FB page
- When contributing online, staff should not post confidential student information.
- Staff should visit their profile's security and privacy settings on social networking sites. At a minimum, staff should have all privacy settings set to 'only friends'.
- Staff should not accept students as friends within their first two years of graduating
- Staff must only use their school accounts to communicate with students regarding school work.

MANAGING CHANGE AND ISSUES ARISING:

- We acknowledge that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the SMMC community has a concern or question pertaining to Social Media or Social Networking sites, this should be directed to the Principal.
- Parents, students or staff who have a complaint or issue arise from Social Media should contact the Principal.
- Where Social Media use relates to Bullying and Harassment, the College's policies associated will be implemented
- Where necessary, the school may consult with Police, where social media misuse is deemed illegal

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS

Social Media Social networking sites: are websites that allow you to create a personal profile about yourself and then chat and share information with others such as family and friends.

Video, audio and photo sharing websites: are sites that allow you to upload and share videos, sounds and photos which can be viewed/heard by web users the world over eg, Tik Tok, Flickr, YouTube, iTunes U, Vimeo, SoundCloud.

Blog: A blog (short for web log) is a kind of online diary, where you regularly post about your life, your passions, business, news or other interests. It is a way of having your own space in the virtual world eg, WordPress, Blogger

Microblogging apps: are websites that post micro-blog like posts to announce what you are currently doing eg, X, Tumblr

Location-based apps: (also known as Geolocation) are applications with the capability to detect and record where you and other people are located

Wikis: are websites where users create, edit and share information about a particular subject or topic eg, Wikipedia, Wikispaces

Online gaming: are games played over some form of computer network and are often based around a community of users (eg, Steam, World of Warcraft, Call of Duty, etc.)

Forums or message boards: are online discussion sites where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages

Online multiplayer gaming platforms: are multiplayer video games which are capable of supporting hundreds or thousands of players simultaneously and usually feature at least one persistent world (eg, Fortnite, World of Warcraft, Words with Friends).