



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

(Created 8 March 2016)

### INTRODUCTION

Ormiston College recognises that access to technology in schools gives students, parents and teachers greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare students for work, life, and citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology and communication skills.

This policy is intended to help social media users make appropriate decisions about the use of social media, such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, online gaming, and comments on web-articles. Examples of current social media platforms include: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google +, Youtube, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr, Reddit etc.

This policy supplements the Staff Online Code of Conduct, Student Acceptable Use, Child Protection Policy and College Privacy Policies. This policy covers all staff (fulltime, part-time & casual), students, parents, volunteers, visitors, businesses acting as an agent for the College, past parents and past students. All parties are expected to comply with this policy to protect the privacy & confidentiality of individuals, and to ensure duty of care and the online protection of Ormiston College students and staff.

### FOR STAFF

#### ***Your Online Reputation***

How you conduct yourself online is very important. Your posts on your social media should be professional, honest, open, mindful of others, and positive at all times. Do not discuss colleagues, students or the private matters of parents or express an opinion that could negatively impact on your reputation, the reputation of others and/or the College. Avoid escalating heated discussions, be respectful to others and only quote factual information. Never contribute to a discussion when you are angry or upset.

Remember, if you choose to contribute online in public forums or closed forums where others in the College community are present, you may be considered by those people, a representative of Ormiston College. Therefore, your views may be seen as the views of the College. Whilst the College acknowledges that you are entitled to your own private opinion, in these situations, you should make it clear to your audience that these are your personal views and not those of the College.

Should the College's reputation be brought into disrepute, or another member of the College's community defamed by a comment or post you have made, the College may be forced to take action which could potentially result in your employment being terminated. You could also be the subject of civil law suits or criminal charges depending on the nature and the severity of your posts.

### ***Communication Rules when sending information from the College***

Unless otherwise approved by the College, social media is not to be used to send official communication from the College. You must always follow the College approved Marketing and Communication procedures. When in doubt, you should consult the Manager of Marketing and Communication. You should never imply that you are the direct authority on official College information, or send the impression that you can be relied upon for the official information, instead you should always direct inquires to the official College sources of information. This will ensure the most up-to-date and correct information is provided.

You may participate in public social media groups that are owned by members of the College community, but are not officially endorsed by the College. You may respond tactfully to another's posts if it contains incorrect information. The response should be linked to an official College source for that information.

### ***Reposting Content owned by the College***

The College supports you reposting official College communication on your social media profile and in general social media groups provided you are doing so in a professional manner. Never change the official content published by the College, and where possible, post the link back to the original and official College content.

### ***Copyright, Intellectual Property and Private Information***

You must never post copyrighted material or another person's intellectual property unless you have the permission of the rights holder or the College has a content license in place that allows posts on social media. If in doubt, consult the Head of the Centre for Learning and Innovation or Manager of ICT Services.

Never post information that is confidential, personal or private that was obtained in your course of work at the College. This would be a breach of the Staff Online Acceptable Use Policy and the College's Privacy Policy and could result in fines to you as an individual from State and Federal law agencies.

### ***Photos***

Be careful when posting photos of yourself and others. Remember that most social media websites, in their terms and conditions will 'own' that picture, and you do not have control over a person who may 'copy' or alter that picture. Once it is online, a picture is difficult to take offline. When posting pictures of others, you should seek their permission first. Photos, images, video stored on the College network are for official College use only and must not be copied or posted to any social networking sites or reproduced or used in any way for personal or any unauthorized purposes. There are also important rules for posting photos of students under your duty of care. These are addressed in the section Using Social Media in the Classroom.

### ***Your 'friend' and Social Media connections with others***

The official position of the College is that it does not endorse a personal social media connection with others in the College community; specifically, to minors under the College's Duty of Care. However, the College does recognise that there may be some exceptions.

In general, your relationship with the College community should be a professional one that exists inside the working times, the College premises and/or the official online environment that the College provides as per your employment, as outlined in College's policies on Child Protection, Duty of Care

and Professional Conduct. You should not accept a friendship/connection request from a member of the College community as an alternate means to the official communication with the College.

If a member of the College community sends you a friendship/connection request, you are not obligated to accept, nor should you expect another member of the College community to accept your request. If you do 'friend'/connect with them, you are doing so at your own risk, and you should consider your online reputation with them.

You are not allowed to have personal online relationships and/or social media connections with a student or any students under our duty of care.

There are some exceptions:

- If you are related to or have a pre-existing connection with a student and this has been approved by the Deputy Head of College or Headmaster.
- You have permission from the Deputy Head of College or Headmaster, and it is for justifiable appropriate education reasons.

### ***Protecting Students Online***

You are required to report any harm or abuse you witness online to a student under our duty of care. This is a mandatory requirement that is enforced by the College's Child Protection Policy and State Law.

### ***Using Social Media in the Classroom***

You are responsible for the duty of care and the online protection of students under your supervision.

- Do not sign your students up to social media websites in the classroom without first consulting with the Manager of ICT Services on the correct process. In some cases, it may require the permission from the parents, there are age restrictions or the-site does not respect the privacy of others.
- Most social media sites by their terms and conditions, and under US law do not allow a child under the age of 13 to use the service. In Australia, our local law enforcement will often side with the American law on their terms and conditions.
- If you have been given the College's authority to proceed with a social media platform, whether registered by you or registered by your students, you must ensure you mitigate private information online by abbreviating student names or using initials. Do not use pictures where students can be identified, including information that appears in the background of the image.
- Employees must not use personal cameras or mobile phones to photograph students unless prior approval has been given by the Headmaster or Deputy Head of College. The use of a personal or College owned mobile phone or camera to photograph students must be for official purposes only. Photos of students found on personal devices may be treated as suspicious in the unlikely event of an investigation.

### ***Check your Privacy Settings***

Know your social media platform. Some apps may share your posts, even if you think you are only sharing it with close friends and family. Your reputation and the College's reputation is determined by your online character and how you contribute to and manage social media.

### ***Best Practice***

Best practice is to keep your personal and College life separate. Ensure you have the maximum privacy settings enabled on your personal social media accounts to prevent other members of our College community finding you and reading your content. You should ensure your personal profile cannot be linked back to the College.

## **FOR STUDENTS**

### ***Signing up to Social Media at Home***

When signing up, do not lie about your age to make you appear older. Most social media platforms will have safety systems in place to protect you from online predators. If you are under the age of 13, you must ask your parents' permission before signing up to a social media platform. If you are older than 13, you should still check with your parents before signing up so you maintain a relationship of trust with them. Your parents may want to supervise your use of social media for your own protection.

### ***Your friends/connections with others***

If you want to 'friend' or connect with someone online, you should talk to that person in 'real life' first. Tell them the online nickname/alias you use so they know what name to expect when they receive the invitation to connect. If someone invites you to be a friend and you are not sure who they are, don't friend them, they could be someone dangerous. Finally, do not friend teachers and other staff at the College. If you need to contact your teacher, use the official College methods e.g. school email.

### ***Your online reputation***

How you conduct yourself online is very important. Your posts on your social media should be professional, honest, open, mindful of others, and positive at all times. Do not discuss teachers, peers, or the private matters of parents or express an opinion that could negatively impact on your reputation, the reputation of others and/or the College. Avoid escalating heated discussions, be respectful to others and only quote factual information. Never contribute to a discussion when you are angry or upset.

Should the College's reputation be brought into disrepute, or another member of the College community is defamed by a comment or post you have made, the College may be forced to take action which could potentially result in your enrolment being terminated. You or your parents could also potentially face civil suits or criminal charges depending on the nature and the severity of your posts.

### ***Student photos***

Be careful when posting photos of yourself and others. Remember that most social media websites, in their terms and conditions will 'own' that picture, and you do not have control over who may 'copy' that picture. Once it is online, a picture is almost impossible to take offline. When posting pictures of others, you should seek their permission first.

You must follow these rules:

- Outside of school hours and official College events, students must not be photographed in their school uniform.
- When taking pictures of other students using your own equipment, you must have the permission of those in your photo.

- Staff members may take photos of you using College owned equipment for educational purposes, in all cases they will follow official College policy and procedures which take into account your rights and the rights of your parent/s on the use of your photos.

### ***Monitoring by the College***

If you are using a College laptop at home, social media use is monitored by the College, and in some cases, conversations and posts may be blocked for your protection. Your parents may choose to block social media on the school laptop for your protection.

### ***Social Media use at the College***

Students generally do not use social media whilst at the College. The ICT Services department by default blocks social media. You are not permitted to bypass the filtering service at school to access social media.

In some cases, your classroom teacher may direct you to use social media. In all cases, you must follow their instructions.

### ***Bullying***

If you are being bullied, persecuted or harassed online or you know of someone else who is, tell your parent/s, classroom teacher or school counsellor immediately. Ignore the bully and do not communicate with them. Consider taking screen shots of the bullying, to show to your parents or staff at Ormiston College.

### ***Check your privacy settings***

Know your social media platform. Some apps may share your posts with others, even if you think you are only sharing it with close friends and family. Check the privacy settings in your social media app to make sure you are protected. If you are unsure ask your parent/s for advice

## **FOR CURRENT PARENTS**

### ***Protecting your Child***

It is at your discretion to choose whether your child uses social media whilst at home. However, if your child is under the age of 13, generally you have to provide permission for them to use social media. For children over the age of 13, most terms and conditions do not require parental permission. It is still recommended that you consult with your child so they are aware of the risks. You should also be aware of your child's online circle of friends and their social media activity.

The College is obligated under the Privacy Act to regulate the personal information, photos and other content of children under its duty of care from being posted to the Internet. If you wish to change these permissions, please contact the enrolments office. Should the College need to use your child's personal information beyond educational reasons (eg Marketing), a further permission form will be sent to you.

### ***Friending/Connecting with Staff at the College***

Staff are generally advised not to accept friendship/connection requests from parents or students of the College. Parents should use official College methods to make contact with their child's teachers and Administration for other College issues. In the same way, if you are invited by a staff member to connect or be friends, you have the right to decline this offer. Staff are expected by the College to maintain a professional working relationship with parents and students both online and offline.

Although the College does not endorse personal friendships over social media between staff and parents or students, it recognises that there are certain exceptions. For example, a close friend or family, or where there is a prior relationship before the staff member began working at the College. The Headmaster may contact you to verify your relationship or your child's relationship with a staff member for professional reasons.

If a staff member, volunteer, or a business acting as an agent of Ormiston College is continually harassing, bullying or defaming you or your child please notify the Headmaster's Office. Take screen shots of the interaction and record chat logs to provide as evidence to the Headmaster.

### ***Your Online Reputation***

How you conduct yourself online is very important. Your posts on your social media should be professional, honest, open, mindful of others, and positive at all times. Do not discuss Staff or the private matters of other College families or express an opinion that could negatively impact on your reputation, the reputation of others and/or the College. Avoid escalating heated discussions, be respectful to others and only quote factual information. Never contribute to a discussion when you are angry or upset.

Should the College's reputation be brought into disrepute, or another member of the College community is defamed by a comment or post you have made, the College may be forced to take action which could potentially result in your child's enrolment being terminated. You could also potentially face civil suits or criminal charges depending on the nature and the severity of your posts.

### ***Parent/Community Owned Social Media Groups and Forums***

The College acknowledges that social media groups that are owned by members of the College community, but are not officially endorsed by the College may exist. Communication within these groups must be accurate, and not defame others or bring the College into disrepute. The College cannot be held responsible for the content posted within these groups.

Staff are under no obligation to be members of these groups, however some may choose to be members of these forums. They are not representing the College and should not be expected to respond to queries. Members of the College community who want their query dealt with efficiently should always use official College contact methods eg calling College reception, to receive the quickest response.

### ***Photographs and other personal information***

The College is obligated to ensure the privacy of your child is protected online when using social media and other websites that require personal information. As a parent who attends College functions and events, where other students of the College attend, the College encourages you to also be careful with the information you share. For example, if you take photographs of your child with other children, ask for permission from their parents before posting to social media.

Posting without permission may lead to other parents complaining to the College about this personal information, which could lead to an investigation by the College and in extreme circumstances the Police. Your child's enrolment with the College could be compromised.

## **Check your privacy settings**

Know your social media platform. Some apps may share your posts with others, even if you think you are only sharing it with close friends and family. Check the privacy settings in your social media app to make sure you are protected.

## **PAST PARENTS, PAST STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS, VISITORS and BUSINESSES ACTING AS AN AGENT FOR THE COLLEGE**

The above entities are bound by the contents and intention of this policy

## **CONSEQUENCES**

If there are serious breaches of this policy, the following actions may occur as determined by the Headmaster.

- Removal of staff from Ormiston College
- Removal of student/s from Ormiston College
- Suspension of volunteer privileges
- Severing relations with businesses acting as agencies for the College
- Legal action may occur if required

## **REVIEW**

This policy is due for review in January 2018