

Related Policies

Guidelines for Professional Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People
Copyright Policy
Complaints Policy
Legal Responsibilities and Authority Policy

Purpose

This policy provides employees with clarity on the use of social media platforms. This document establishes a process by which Catholic Education's official social media interactions can be managed with the best interests of the Catholic Education brand and reputation in mind. It confirms the responsibility of staff to conduct themselves in a professional manner and that the Duty of Care that Principals and Teachers have toward their students applies across Social Media. This policy also sets out expected behaviour for people who do not officially represent Catholic Education on social media, but could, through their behaviour, impact on the reputation of Catholic Education. While Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the predominant social media channels used by the Catholic Education Office and Schools, this protocol will be applied in a common sense way to other social media channels used by employees and by the organisation in the future.

Policy

Social media is online media that allows for interaction and/or participation. Examples include:

- Social networking and micro-blogging sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Tumblr and Pinterest
- Video and photo sharing sites like Flickr and YouTube
- Online forums and discussion blogs, including comments on online news articles.

Guiding Principles

Whenever Catholic Education employees are interacting on social media, whether in an official or personal capacity, the following guiding principles should be top of mind.

- My online behaviour should at all times demonstrate a Christ centered respect for the dignity of each person.
- The Catholic Education Office Child Protection policies must always be observed.
- I will at all times recognise the right of students to a safe, physical and emotional environment including maintaining appropriate boundaries in worker-student relationships and taking reasonable steps to protect students from harm
- I will not criticise clients or colleagues
- I will not bring Catholic Education into disrepute.
- I will respond to others' opinions professionally and respectfully
- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment
- I will not harass, bully or intimidate
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly

- I will be polite, considerate, kind and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm
- I will champion Catholic Education

Inappropriate use of social media includes, (but not limited to):

- Inviting or accepting students into personal social media platforms, including ex-students or the parents of current students on these platforms without discussion with their Principal or Supervisor.
- Conducting a private business on Catholic Education social media presence
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language
- Stalking, bullying, trolling or marginalising any individual or group
- Accessing or uploading pornographic, gambling or illegal content, including extreme images of graphic content (blood and gore etc) or information regarding activity relating to firearms, bombs, terrorism etc
- Accessing sites that promote hatred or extreme/fundamental beliefs and values
- Direct political affiliation, unless an individual is running for election (but only on a personal account)
- Uploading information of a confidential nature
- Hacking or attempting to infiltrate the systems of Catholic Education or another organisation
- Criticising or denigrating Catholic Education, or other organisations, and our/their employees, or supporters
- Activity that interferes with work commitments
- Activity that uses excessive bandwidth, either uploading or downloading, within the Catholic Education ICT network
- Paid endorsement of any kind, including in kind services or gifts
- Activity that brings Catholic Education or the person's professionalism or ability to act in a professional manner into disrepute

It is the duty of everyone who is affiliated with Catholic Education to alert either the Head of Directorate Services, or the Principal, to any inappropriate content they may encounter.

Naming Conventions

It is important that the full name and suburb of a School is used in the title so that it can be easily found and differentiated from other Schools with the same name.

For example:

Facebook:

- Good Shepherd Primary School Amaroo
- Merici College Braddon
- St Patrick's Primary School Bega
- Carroll College Broulee
- Holy Trinity Early Learning Centre Curtin

Twitter:

- @GoodShepherdPS
- @MericiCollege
- @StPatsBega
- @CarrollCollege
- @ELCCurtin

Official Accounts

An official account (being it a blog, twitter account, Facebook page etc) that represents Catholic Education should stipulate this within its page or account description. An official social media page must be sanctioned by the Head of Directorate (in the case of the Catholic Education office) or the Principal (in the case of a School). The account must carry the following, or a version of the following, words.

“This is the official account/page/etc for Good Shepard Primary School Amaroo” followed by a brief description of the School and the purpose of the account relating to the particular social media platform.

Personal Accounts

An Account (being it a blog, twitter account, Facebook page etc) that is not official, but is set up by employees of Catholic Education for personal reasons can have an affiliation to the organisation, so long as the following is undertaken:

- It does not compromise professional relationships by accepting student requests for access
- It should not have the affiliation with Catholic Education as the primary identifier
- It should stipulate that the opinions expressed are the persons' own, and not that of Catholic Education
- It should state a disclaimer that reposting, 'likes', retweeting, etc do not represents the views of Catholic Education
- Can not bring Catholic Education into disrepute.

Permissions

Catholic Education Office

At the Catholic Education Office, Directorate Services is responsible for all official use of social media. Personal use as defined in the Definitions section is up to the individual employee, however, individuals are accountable for the consequences of their actions on social media, and will be disciplined according to the Codes of Conduct and their individual employment agreements.

Schools

Schools have jurisdiction over their operations regarding social media delivered in their name. However, Schools have an obligation to the system to ensure they comply with this policy and ensure they keep the Catholic Education Office abreast of the social media platforms they are active in. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that social media is maintained, that best practice is used and that staff are adequately trained to use the medium.

Personal Use

Individuals who are employees of Catholic Education do not have permission to post official Catholic Education content. They can, however, repost, retweet etc Catholic Education posts, material or comment without substantial or meaningful change as part of showing their affiliation or support for the organisation.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

Social Media

Is defined as 'any conversation or activity that occurs online, where people can share information or data that might impact on Catholic Education'.

Catholic Education

Refers to the Catholic Education Office in Manuka and Yarralumla and the 56 Schools and six Early Learning Centres in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Official Use

Is when an employee is using social media as a representative of Catholic Education with permission from their Principal or the Head of Directorate Services. An alternative definition is when an employee is posting from a social media account that is labelled as an official 'Catholic Education' account, i.e. not a distinct individual person. Posts from these accounts must:

- comply with Catholic Education ethics, the Guidelines for Professional Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young people and the 'guiding principles' stipulated within the 1st section of this policy
- do no harm
- not promote individual staff and/or businesses or money making ventures, or individual political candidates, preferences or parties.

Personal Use

Is when an employee is using social media as themselves, not officially representing Catholic Education, but identifying themselves as affiliated with Catholic Education in their online biographies, profiles or posts, or through other digital platforms.

People who are employees who do not identify themselves as being affiliated to Catholic Education are still counted as representing the organisation, as the nature of the online world means they could be traced back to the organisation through their online presence. Post from these accounts must:

- comply with Catholic Education ethics, the Guidelines for Professional Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young people and the 'guiding principles' stipulated within the 1st section of this policy
- do no harm
- not suggest or imply that Catholic Education endorses individual businesses, money making ventures or political candidates or parties.

Procedures

Misuse of social media can have serious consequences for Catholic Education, and consequently that misuse can have serious consequences in terms of disciplinary action for staff. Schools and the Catholic Education Office are responsible for ensuring adherence to the Social Media Policy by their staff. This includes undertaking appropriate risk assessment and performance management or disciplinary action, for any suspected or identified breach.

In the event of serious misconduct, disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal may occur.

Catholic Education office

The Head of Directorate Services has delegation for all official social media activity undertaken by the Catholic Education Office. The secondary delegation is the Communications Officer for matters relating to Facebook and Twitter. The Director has veto rights on the primary and secondary delegations.

School

The Principal has delegation for all official Social Media activity undertaken by the School, with a secondary delegation falling to either their official communications person or Assistant Principal.

Others

Individuals who undertake personal activity in the social media space can self-moderate. They should use common sense and be sensible about their use, always ensuring they are in line with the requirements of this social media policy. Advice can be sought from the Head of Directorate Services or the Communications Officer.

Complaints through Social Media

Complaints or negative comments regarding Catholic Education will be made through social media channels. Both official and personal users of social media are discouraged from arguing or refuting complaints or negative feedback through social media channels. This behaviour can antagonise or fuel further attacks on Catholic Education and our brand and/or reputation. All complaints should be managed through the Catholic Education Complaints Policy.

In the event of a complaint or negative comment about Catholic Education, it is important to address the comment as soon as possible by responding with the following, or a tailored version-

"Your feedback is very important to us. Consider providing your feedback through our website at cg.catholic.edu.au using the Contact Us form."

Deleting Posts

Social media is fluid, two-way, busy and often self-regulating. Social media can be used to disseminate information, but should be considered a form of two-way communication and a vehicle to listen to the 'wider' community views. Organisations that heavily control content on their social media pages, blogs and accounts, mostly through the deletion of questionable or disapproving content, significantly reduce the impact, and usefulness, of social media as a channel for information distribution.

Catholic Education will not delete posts that are complaints, or negative, except when they breach any of the conditions outlined for employees in the 'inappropriate use' section above. Where possible, the administrator will contact the user whose post has been removed, providing them with an explanation why it has been removed and the necessary action(s) for it to be reposted.

References

Nil

Forms

Nil

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