ST. ANDREW’S GRAMMAR

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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Overview

Social Networking Sites (SNS), Blogs (Web Logs) and World Wide Web (WWW) Personal Web Sites (PWS) should be considered documents that are published within the public domain. Such sites allow the free sharing of information and opinions. While they have their place in private life, they may cause problems within a school community on several levels.

Information placed on these sites may be useful, entertaining, and providing a medium for friends to share experiences, photographs, messages and generally to stay in touch. On the other hand entries may breach privacy conventions or regulations, may be considered to be "cyber bullying"; they may be defamatory, obscene, libellous or just inappropriate.

Information published on the internet, including that in SNS and blogs should be considered to be permanently published. It is almost impossible to remove information once it has appeared - even when it seems to have been taken down.

The School’s computer network, Internet access facilities, computers and other School ICT equipment/devices are for educational purposes appropriate to the School environment. This applies whether the ICT equipment is owned or leased either partially or wholly by the School, and used on or off the School site.

Related Documents

Child Protection Policy
Complaints and Disputes Policy
Duty of Care Policy
Learning Technologies Student Appropriate Use Policy
Staff Induction Policy
Behaviour Management Policy
Privacy Policy
Definition

There are various forms of social media and there are always new forms of social media being developed. Currently, the main forms of social media include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites: Facebook, MySpace, Google+, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Bebo and Friendster;
- Mobile device apps: Instagram, Kik, Flappy Birds and other gaming apps;
- Video and photo sharing websites: Content Communities such as Flickr, Imgur and YouTube;
- Micro-blogging sites: Twitter, Posterous, Dailybooth;
- Blogs: including corporate blogs and personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications;
- Podcasts: including corporate podcasts and personal podcasts;
- Forums and discussion boards: e.g. local discussion boards, Whirlpool, Yahoo! or Google Groups;
- Virtual game worlds: e.g. World of Warcraft;
- Virtual Social Worlds: e.g. Second Life;
- Online encyclopaedias: e.g. Wikis such as Wikipedia, Geo-wiki, GeoNames and Sidewiki.

Students

Student use of SNS whilst at school is forbidden. The School's ICT resources are provided for teaching and learning and the use of non-educational sites is discouraged. Certain sites such as Facebook are blocked on the School network.

Student use of SNS outside school must be considerate of the ramifications of SNS postings within the extended school community. Students are not permitted to make any inappropriate remarks about the School or any individuals associated with the School on Facebook. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the School following the student Behaviour Management Policy.

Information and opinions that refer directly or indirectly to the School, its administration, its students or its members of staff must not be posted unless officially sanctioned by the Principal and the individual(s) concerned.

Cyber Bullying, Peer Pressure, Spam

Students must not engage in bullying, spamming, illegal behaviour, malicious blogging or similar antisocial behaviours. Students who engage in antisocial behaviours in a social networking or blogging site that have ramifications within the School community (such as bullying a fellow student) will be subject to School regulations regarding such behaviour even though the infringements occurred outside the school.

Advice to Students on Cybersafety

Students are advised never to offer any personal information including last name, contact information, home address, phone numbers, school's name, e-mail address, last names of friends or relatives, instant messaging names, age, or birth date.
Students are advised never to post inappropriate pictures of themselves or anyone else, and be sure any images you provide do not reveal any of the previously mentioned information. Remember to check the background of a picture also.

Students are advised to use blogging provider sites with clearly stated terms of use, and make sure they can protect the actual blogs, not just the user accounts, with password protection. However, it is prudent to presume that anyone can see it.

**Employees of St. Andrew’s Grammar**

Teaching staff should not give out personal details such as home phone numbers or private email addresses to students. Staff should avoid, where possible, providing their mobile phone numbers to parents. However, providing mobile phone numbers to parents is sometimes necessary in relation to school endorsed activities (e.g. camps, excursions).

Employees need to be aware that the public nature of blogs and social networking sites means that anyone can read your comments, including your employer, a prospective employer or a person seeking information about your personality, political or religious views.

**Teacher - Student Relations**

Teachers hold a professional position in society and are expected to uphold moral and ethical codes of behaviour, often to a greater degree than any other profession or vocation.

Teachers should, as a rule, not have external friendships (i.e. personal relationships) with current students beyond that which is normal for the teacher/student relationship. A personal relationship on a SNS would exceed the accepted bounds of a teacher/student relationship and might leave the teacher open to allegations of improper conduct.

Teachers need also to be aware of interaction with the parents of current students in that comments or opinions may be construed in ways not envisaged that may lead to unforeseen social or legal complications.

Friendships (personal relationships) with ex-students are a matter for the individual teacher but it is prudent to consider the ramifications of personal relationships with ex-students who have younger siblings or friends still at the school, where private or personal information could be passed on to third parties.

**Your Colleagues and Your Position**

Be thoughtful and accurate in your posts, and be respectful of how other members of the school community may be affected. All St. Andrew’s Grammar employees can be viewed as representatives of the School, which can add significance to your public reflections on a wide variety of topics.

**Legal Liability**

The laws that apply in the Australian society also apply in cyberspace.

When individuals choose to go public with opinions via a blog, SNS or a personal web site, they are legally responsible for their commentary. Individuals can be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. Employees of St Andrew’s Grammar should exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterisations. The
summary position is that you blog (or comment on the blogs of others) at your own risk. Outside parties can pursue legal action against you for postings.

Privileged Information

It is forbidden for employees to divulge, post or publish any confidential, proprietary, or privileged information pertaining to the School, its staff, its students, its policies, finance or procedures. This information may not appear in a blog, a personal web site or a social networking site.

Personal Web Sites

If you have a personal web site and the students or members of the wider School community are aware of it, care should be taken to ensure it is suitable for general viewing by students and parents. Ensure that there is no inappropriate content or links to sites that are inappropriate.

If you have a personal web site that does not conform to the expectations above, you must ensure that it is not publicised within the School community. It might be prudent to ensure no personal identification is available at such a site that might lead back to you and hence the School.