

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

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. The College is committed to helping students develop 21st 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.

PURPOSE

This Policy establishes the principles, standards and legal obligations governing the responsible use of social media by all members of the Ormiston College community. It is intended to ensure compliance with Australian and Queensland legislation, protect children and young people, and safeguard the reputation of the College.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all users of social media in connection with Ormiston College, including staff, students, parents/carers, volunteers, contractors, visitors, alumni and affiliated organisations. It applies to social media use on College-owned systems and personal devices, whether on or off College grounds, where there is a connection to the College.

LEGISLATION and REFERENCES

- *Privacy Act (Cwlth) 1988*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*
- *Criminal Code 1995 (Cth)*
- *Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)*
- *Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004 (Qld)*
- *Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)*
- *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 (Qld)*
- *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)*
- *Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)*
- *eSafety Commissioner Online Safety framework, including age-restriction requirements effective from December 2025*
- *ACECQA - Safe use of digital technologies and online environments*
- *QCT - Professional Boundaries: A Guideline for Queensland Teachers*

Ormiston College Related Documents

- Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Copyright Policy
- Photo Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Services Policy
- Communication Process Guidelines

DEFINITIONS

Social Media	A website or application that enables users to create and share content to interact with other users, or to find people with similar interest to one's own.
Users	Anyone over the age of 16 who has a social media account and uses this account in relation to Ormiston College.
Personally Identifiable Information (PII)	Information that identifies an individual, this includes photos and information within a photo.
Consent	A person's voluntary agreement to a specific proposition or action, given with sufficient legal and mental capacity without coercion, fraud or error. The person must be sufficiently informed of the nature, risks and implications of the agreement or action. The person has the right to revoke consent at any time, even if initially given.
Authorised Staff	Any staff member who has been given authority by the Marketing Department or the Headmaster to proceed with an action.

CORE PRINCIPLES

All social media use connected to the College must:

- protect privacy and personal identifiable information
- maintain respectful, lawful and ethical conduct
- protect children and young people from harm
- respect intellectual property and copyright
- avoid defamation, harassment or reputational change
- maintain appropriate professional and person boundaries
- use authorised College communication channels where required

ACCEPTABLE USE

Users may engage with social media in ways that are lawful, respectful and consistent with the values of Ormiston College.

Authorised staff may use official College social media accounts for communication and educational purposes in accordance with College procedures. The College may be required to remove defamatory content if ordered by a court under Queensland defamation legislation.

Educational use of social media must be approved by the Manager of ICT Services, supervised and compliant with privacy and child protection obligations.

PROHIBITED USE

Users must not:

- Share confidential, private or personally identifiable information about students or staff without consent.
- Publish images, video or audio recordings of students without approved consent
- Engage in bullying, harassment, discrimination or threatening behaviour
- Make defamatory statements about the College or members of its community
- Misrepresent themselves as speaking on behalf of the College without authorisation
- Circumvent College filtering or monitoring systems

Making false statements that harm a person's reputation or privacy can result in a civil defamation lawsuit or a serious invasion of privacy tort lawsuit.

Doxxing (purposely publishing personal information online – including photos - to maliciously cause harm to a person or persons) is a criminal offence and can result in being sentenced to prison for up to 6 years.

FOR STAFF

Staff must maintain professional boundaries and must not form personal social media connections with enrolled students.

- The Queensland College of Teachers strongly recommends that a staff member refrain from personal relationships with former students for a period of one to two years after the cessation of the teacher-student relationship
- It is possible for some staff to have a pre-existing social media connection with an enrolled student through family, friendships, other work or volunteering commitments. In these cases, the staff member should declare their connection to the Headmaster
- Staff members are not obliged to accept 'friend'/connections from others

Staff must use College-approved communication channels for interactions with students and parents

- Unless an authorised staff member, social media is not to be used to send official communication from the College
- Staff may choose to participate in public social media groups that are owned by members of the College community but are not officially endorsed by the College. Staff must always link to or quote the official College source for information. Eg Website, College App
- Personal social media use must not imply official College endorsement

Staff have mandatory reporting obligations and must report online harm or child safety concerns

- This obligation occurs in all instances, all locations & at all times
- Staff must always follow the process as defined in the College's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy.

Staff must not use personal cameras or mobile phones to photograph students unless specifically authorised.

- Most social media websites, in their Terms and Conditions will 'own' a photo. It will be difficult to take the photo offline.
- Most personal phones will feature cloud technology that automatically saves the photo online, once the photo is taken. This hinders the College ability to comply with the Australian Privacy Act.
- There is a strict 'no personal device policy' when in the vicinity of the Early Learning Centre or Outside Hours School Care Service, as they must comply with the national guidelines on the safe use of digital technologies

FOR STUDENTS

Students must comply with legal age restrictions for social media platforms.

- Students under the age of 16 must not create a social media account.
- Students must not sign up for social media using their College provided email address or digital identity.

Students must conduct themselves respectfully online and must not contact staff via personal social media accounts.

- Students must not use social media whilst on College grounds or in class.
- If it is necessary to contact a teacher, students must do so by using the official College methods e.g., College email.

Online bullying, harmful or concerning content must be reported in accordance with College procedures.

- Students may report anonymously via Symie or follow the procedures as defined in the College's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy located on the College's website.
- Sexting (the sharing of nude or sexual pictures or videos) is illegal for any child who is under the age of 18, regardless of the consensus. The consequence can include having a criminal record, being placed on the Queensland Child Protection Offender Registry or being sentenced to jail.

Examples of sexting include: Posing in a sexual way, involved in a sexual act, being in a photo with someone else who posing in a sexual way or act, or showing private areas for a sexual purpose.

Students must not use personal devices to take photographs of other students or people in the College

- Students must follow the Student Mobile Phone Policy

FOR PARENTS AND OTHER COLLEGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Parents and community members must respect privacy and consent requirements when posting content involving students or staff.

- There is a College Photo Policy that should also be followed in conjunction with this policy.
- Staff are not required to accept a 'friend' or social media connection that a parent may instigate.
- Staff are not required to join parent / community owned social media groups and forums
- There is a strict 'no personal device policy' when in the vicinity of the Early Learning Centre or Outside Hours School Care Service, as they must comply with the national guidelines on the safe use of digital technologies

Social media must not be used to harass, intimidate or defame members of the College community.

- Avoid naming staff and students in grievances
- The College does not have the power to regulate or control parent / community owned social media groups and forums.

Concerns regarding College matters should be raised through official College communication channels.

- Follow the procedures as defined in the College's Reporting Concerns of Risk and Harm Policy located on the College's website.
- Concerns for personally identifiable information can be submitted by the Complaints Procedure addressed to the Headmaster.

Advice on protecting your child

- Children under the age of 16 are restricted from certain social media websites. The eSafety Commissioner is responsible for maintain the social media ban list in Australia. The Social media platforms on this list are responsible for enforcing minimum age requirements.
- For internet services not on the social media band list, parents should consult with their child before signing up to ensure they are aware of the risks and that there are appropriate boundaries in place.
- Parents should also be aware of their child's online circle of friends and online social activity.
- If there ever is a staff member, volunteer, or a business acting as an agent of Ormiston College is continually harassing, bullying or defaming a parent or their child please notify the Headmaster's Office. Take screen shots of the interaction and record chat logs to provide as evidence to the Headmaster.

GENERAL ADVICE FOR ALL USERS

Check Privacy Settings

- Know the social media platform in use and its privacy functions and limitations.
- Ensure maximum privacy settings are enabled on personal social media accounts
- Some social media through their terms and conditions may control the distribution or redistribution of content shared on their service. Content shared on such services may be shared with 3rd parties outside of a user's control.
- Ensure that personal social media profiles cannot be linked back to the College.

CONSEQUENCES

The College may monitor use of College-owned ICT systems and official social media accounts.

Breaches of this Policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with applicable College procedures and agreements.

Serious breaches may result in suspension of access, termination of enrolment, contract, employment or volunteer privileges, or referral to external authorities.

Version and Review Control Register

Version	Policy Document Owner	Policy Document Approver	Approval Date	Changes History/ Superseded Documents	Next Review Date
v230124	Ormiston College Governing Body	Headmaster	11/03/2024		January 2025
V160326	Ormiston College Governing Body	Headmaster	19/05/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review, • change of legislation in Privacy Act. • To update due to Social Media ban for under 16's. 	March 2027