



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this Policy is to outline acceptable use of Social Media whilst being a member of the Ormiston College Community.		
<b>Scope:</b>	This Policy is to be adhered to by all stakeholders which include all staff, directors, managers, workers, parents, students, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and visitors at the College.		
<b>References and Legislation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Queensland College of Teachers (qct.edu.au) <a href="#">Professional Boundaries: A Guideline for Queensland Teachers</a></li><li><i>Privacy Act (Cwlth) 1988</i></li></ul>		
<b>Ormiston College Related Documents:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Child Protection Policy</li><li>Privacy Policy</li><li>Staff Code of Conduct Policy</li><li>Copyright Policy</li><li>Photo Policy</li><li>Acceptable Use of ICT Services Policy</li><li>ICT Personnel Code of Ethics</li><li>Communication Process Guidelines</li></ul>		
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	College Governing Body	<b>Version:</b>	V230124
<b>Status:</b>	APPROVED	<b>Supersedes:</b>	V10618
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	January 2025
<b>Authorised by:</b>	BRETT WEBSTER	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b>	11/03/2024
<b>Signature:</b>			

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## **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 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.

## **FOR STAFF**

### **Online Reputation**

How you conduct yourself online is very important. Posts on 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 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 lawsuits 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. The College approved Communication Process Guidelines must always be followed. When in doubt, consult the Manager - Marketing and Communication. 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 always direct inquiries 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.

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## **Reposting Content Owned By The College**

The College supports reposting of official College communication on social media profiles and in general social media groups, provided it is done 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 without 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 Copyright Officer (Teacher Librarian) or the Manager - ICT Services.

Never post information that is confidential, personal or private that was obtained in the course of work at the College. This would be a breach of the College's Acceptable Use of ICT Services Policy and Privacy Policy and could result in fines 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, seek their permission first. Photos, images and 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 unauthorised 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.

## **'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 the College's policies on Child Protection and Staff Code of Conduct. Staff should not accept friendship/connection requests from members 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.

Staff are not allowed to have personal online relationships and/or social media connections with a student or any students under the College's duty of care.

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.

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There are some exceptions:

- If the staff member is related to or has a pre-existing connection with a student and this has been approved by the Deputy Head of College or Headmaster.
- Permission from the Deputy Head of College or Headmaster has been received and it is for justifiable, appropriate educational reasons.

### **Protecting Students Online**

It is a requirement to report any harm or abuse to a student witnessed online under the College's 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**

Staff are responsible for the duty of care and the online protection of students under their supervision.

- Do not register students for social media websites in the classroom without first consulting with the Manager - ICT Services on the correct process. In some cases, it may require permission from parents, there are age restrictions or the site does not respect the privacy of others.
- Most social media sites Terms and Conditions, and under American law, do not allow a child under the age of 13 to use the service. In Australia, local law enforcement will often side with the American law on Terms and Conditions.
- If authority has been given by the College to proceed with a social media platform, whether registered by you or registered by your students, concerns with the private information online must be mitigated 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.
- Staff 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. Photographs of students found on personal devices may be treated as suspicious in the unlikely event of an investigation.

### **Check Your Privacy Settings**

Know the social media platform being used. Some apps may share posts, even if you think you are only sharing it with close friends and family. A staff member's reputation and the College's reputation is determined by their online character and contribution and management of social media.

### **Best Practice**

Best practice is for a staff member to keep their personal and College life separate. Ensure maximum privacy settings are enabled on personal social media accounts to prevent other members of the College community finding and reading online content posted by the staff member. The staff member should ensure that their personal profile cannot be linked back to the College.

## FOR STUDENTS

### Signing Up To Social Media At Home

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

### Your Friends / Connections With Others

Students who want to 'friend' or connect with someone online should talk to that person in real life first. Inform the other person of the online nickname/alias that is used so that they are aware when they receive the invitation to connect. If an invitation to be a 'friend' is received from an unknown person, do not 'friend' them, they could be a dangerous person. Do not 'friend' teachers or other staff of the College. If it is necessary to contact a teacher, do so by using the official College methods eg., College email.

### Your Online Reputation

How you conduct yourself online is very important. Posts on social media should be professional, honest, open, mindful of others and positive at all times. Do not discuss teachers, peers or private matters of parents or express an opinion that could negatively impact your reputation and the reputations of others and/or the College. Avoid escalating heated discussions, be respectful of 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 termination of enrolment. There could also potentially be civil suits or criminal charges depending on the nature and severity of the posts.

### Student Photos/Pictures

Be careful when posting photos/pictures of yourself and others. In the Terms and Conditions of most social media websites, photos/pictures are owned by the company, there is no control over who may 'copy' the photos/pictures. Once online, a photo/picture is almost impossible to take offline. When posting photos/pictures of others always seek permission first.

Rules when taking/using student photos:

- Outside of school hours and official College events, students must not be photographed in school uniform.
- When using your own equipment to take photos/pictures of other students, always seek permission from those in the photo/picture.
- Staff members may take photos/pictures using College-owned equipment for educational purposes, in all cases they will follow College policy and procedures which take into account the student's rights and parent/s rights on the use of the photos/pictures.

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### **Monitoring By The College**

When 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. 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. ICT Services by default blocks social media. Students are not permitted to bypass the filtering service at school to access social media.

In some cases, classroom teachers may direct students to use social media. In all cases, students 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 a Guidance Counsellor immediately. Ignore the bully and do not communicate with them. Consider taking screen shots of the bullying, to show parents or staff at Ormiston College.

### **Check Your Privacy Settings**

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

## **FOR CURRENT PARENTS**

### **Protecting Your Child**

It is at a parent's discretion to choose whether their child uses social media whilst at home. However, if the child is under the age of 13, generally the parent has 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 the parent consults with their child so that they are aware of the risks. Parents should also be aware of their child's online circle of friends and social media activity.

Under its duty of care the College is obligated under the *Privacy Act* to regulate the personal information, photos and other content of children from being posted to the Internet. Parents may wish to change these permissions and can do so by contacting the Enrolments Office. Should the College need to use a child's personal information beyond educational reasons (eg. marketing), a further permission form will be sent to the parent.

### **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 of communication to make contact with their child's teachers and Administration for other College issues. In the same way, if a parent is invited by a staff member to connect or be friends, the parent has the right to decline this offer. The College expects staff to maintain a professional working relationship with parents and students both online and offline.

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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 the parent to verify the relationship or their 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 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.

### **Your Online Reputation**

How you conduct yourself online is very important. Posts on 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 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. Also the parent/s could potentially face civil suits or criminal charges depending on the nature and the severity of the posts.

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

The College acknowledges that social media groups 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 must 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. Staff who choose to join these groups 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 e.g. calling College Reception to receive the quickest response.

### **Photographs and Other Personal Information**

The College is obligated to ensure the privacy of children 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 Ormiston College students attend, the College encourages parents to also be careful with the information they share. For example, when taking 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 the social media platform. Some apps may share posts with others, even if you think it is only sharing it with close friends and family. Check the privacy settings in your social media app to make sure you are protected. If unsure ask for advice.

## **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.

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