Westminster School

Policy Title: **Social Media Policy**

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Approval body / Approver: SLT

Policy Title	**Social Media Policy**
Contact person and role	Carly Hocking ('93) Director of Advancement and Marketing
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Overview

The School identified the need for a Social Media Policy so that staff are aware of the School's expectations of social media use. Social media is a significant component of Westminster School's suite of communication tools. It provides us with the capacity to engage, inform, educate and interact with the greater School community and the media. It also provides us with the capacity to communicate in a relevant, timely, reliable and immediate manner, regardless of our location.

Purpose

The purpose of the Social Media Policy is to assist staff in determining the appropriate use of social media and associated online communities, including engagement with students, Old Scholars and the wider community while maintaining professional standards in their use of social media. This policy has been developed to protect the School's students, staff, assets, goodwill and reputation, through clear protocols for use of social media in both official and personal capacities.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees (whether full-time, permanent part-time, casual, volunteers or contractors) of Westminster School and should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct and other policies related to behaviour, professional conduct and responsibilities, including the use of information and communication technologies. This also include policies issued by external bodies such as the Teachers Registration Board of SA from time to time.

In particular, it is essential that staff read this policy as a site-specific adjunct to the:

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people
Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings 2017 (2nd Edition, revised 2019)
as jointly issued by the Government of South Australia Dept for Education, Catholic Education South Australia and Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA), and accessible through this link: **Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people**

Definitions

Social media is the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms. It encompasses but is not limited to popular platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, WeChat, TikTok, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter and SnapChat, and also includes blogs, forums, wikis, photo galleries and videos. In the context of the curriculum and possible learning activities, it includes educational platforms such as Edmodo, Schoology, etc.

Authorised Employees (or authorised delegates) are identified as: Members of the School Leadership team, the Community and Communications Manager, Marketing Manager, Content and Channel Marketing Coordinator as well as members of the School's wider community who have been granted authoring rights by the Principal or the Director of Advancement and Marketing for the School's social media accounts.

Policy

5.1. Employees of Westminster School are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as is expected in our physical work environment.

This includes:

- Being impartial and professional;

- Behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment;
- Dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential;
- Being sensitive to the diversity of colleagues, peers, students and the community;
- Taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest or perceptions thereof;
- Upholding Westminster School's values;
- Protecting the integrity and reputation of Westminster School, its students, parents and staff;
- Complying with applicable laws and legislation, including copyright, intellectual property, privacy, financial disclosure, defamation and other such applicable laws;
- Protecting the privacy, confidentiality and security of Westminster School, its employees, students, parents, partners and suppliers.

5.2 Only authorised employees or authorised delegates may create social media identities, profiles or accounts that use the Westminster School name, badge or brand, or are designed to represent the School in any way.

5.2.1 Only authorised employees or authorised delegates may officially represent Westminster School, and only in authorised social media platforms, as outlined in this policy.

5.2.2 Westminster School has approved the use of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Vimeo and YouTube, as the preferred social media platforms for the School. No other platforms are to be used unless otherwise authorised by the School Leadership Team.

5.2.3 Westminster School has approved the School Leadership Team and other relevant staff and, in specific circumstances, School Student Leaders and members of the community as the School's official representatives to use social media on behalf of the School. No other employees are to officially represent the School unless authorised by the School Leadership Team.

5.2.4 Authorised employees or authorised delegates posting comments on official School communications should observe the standards of conduct and behaviour above (item 5.1).

5.2.5 Westminster School reserves the right to delete official posts or comments that are deemed to be defamatory or offensive.

5.3. Authorised employees or authorised delegates using the School's owned social media accounts in an official capacity are given autonomy to represent Westminster School's views in an ongoing conversation with the public, parents and students. In doing so, authorised employees or authorised delegates must ensure that the content they post on the School's owned social media account is in no way:

- Politically sensitive
- Associated with a project or activity deemed to be high risk
- A response to an individual or group that is deemed to be high risk
- Directly quoting another staff member (eg a response attributed to the Principal).

5.4. Content communicated via social media should be consistent with content conveyed via other formats (eg branding, key messages).

5.5. Information published via social media is a public record and a corporate record for record-keeping purposes.

5.6. Westminster School expects that all employees exercise sound judgement and common sense when using social media, whether at work, home or elsewhere. Employees using social media in a personal capacity must take due care to ensure that any comments, opinions, photographs or contributions made online are their own, as private citizens, and cannot be interpreted as an official statement or position of Westminster School. This extends to engagement with other community pages and groups that have been set up within the Westminster School community.

Staff are reminded that at all times, they owe the School common law duties of fidelity, good faith and co-operation (as the School does to them). Inappropriate usage outside school hours may lead to disciplinary action.

5.7 All learning activities that involve the use of online communities should aim to use those specifically, or primarily, designed for use in education. Where this is not possible, permission must be obtained first from the Principal or Head of School.

Broad access to the School's online community should be limited to essential personnel only. Where the participation of others beyond the School community is part of the activity, this participation should be carefully monitored by the coordinating teacher or staff member. Students should use only their School email accounts for the purpose of registration and identification in the community. Students should receive clear instructions about appropriate conduct in the community. School logos, trademarks, official photos or photos of students may be used where they are integral to the activity and comply with privacy requirements. Copyright material should not be used without proper attribution.

Personal Use of Social Media

6.1. The School recognises that you may wish to use social media in your personal life. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit your personal expression or online activities.

6.2. However, you should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the School in certain circumstances via your personal use of social media. Accordingly, you should comply with this policy to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimised.

6.3. You are personally responsible for the content published by you, or in your name, in a personal capacity on any form of social media platform. It is important that both words and photos are considered not only together as a post but separately to ensure that no aspect of your content could be construed as a breach of your duty.

6.4. Where your comments or profile can identify you as a School employee, you must:

- only disclose and discuss publicly available information – sharing of official School posts is acceptable as long as any additional commentary you make is consistent with the spirit of the original;
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant School policies and the underpinning Mission and Values;
- expressly state on all postings identifying you as a School employee that the stated views are your own and are not those of the School;
- be polite and respectful to all people with whom you interact;
- adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws;
- your use of social media must not interfere with the performance of your duties;
- not use social media to publicly complain about your employment or decisions made by the School;
- make it clear that you are expressing your own personal views so that your comments are not perceived to be made on behalf of the School;

- not be friends with nor encourage communication with a student on social media unless related to you or the student is a close family friend and this relationship is treated with care and respect and with the approval of parents – this extends to sharing photos of your own child with their best friends, also Westminster students;
- exercise caution when accepting or sending 'friend' requests from or to members of the Westminster community, including parents of students you teach and Old Scholars you have taught, particularly if less than a year out of School and/or they still have siblings at the School.

You must not:

- imply that you are authorised to speak as a representative of the School, nor give the impression that the views you express are those of the School;
- use the identity or likeness of another employee or student of the School;
- imply you are authorised to speak on behalf of the School, or give the impression that any views you express are those of the School;
- use your School email address or any School logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of your personal comment;
- use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in your capacity as an employee of the School;
- post pictures and stories on your personal social media of your own day at School that includes photos of students, even if you think the story is 'great' or the students cannot be readily identified as a Westminster student (eg on camp).
- post material that is, or might be construed as, offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another employee of the School, or that infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the School's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

Reporting Misuse and Consequences for Policy Breaches

Social media use may be monitored by the School. Suspicions or allegations of social media misuse or breaches of this policy should be promptly reported to a line manager for assessment and/or investigation.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Staff who breach relevant laws may also be held personally liable.

Finally, on some occasions the personal line between acceptable and non-acceptable online behaviour could be blurred or misunderstood. If in doubt, it is wise to stop and err on the side of caution so that your actions cannot be misconstrued by others who are privy to your activity.