



Social Media Policy

Endorsed by School Council: 31st July 2018

Rationale:

New Gisborne Primary School (NGPS) recognises that social media platforms, such as Facebook, provide a valuable means of communication, sharing, learning and engagement with the school community. Whilst NGPS does not use Facebook directly, it does occasionally use the Parent's Association Facebook page and other forms of social media to communicate with students, parents and the broader community.

All members of the NGPS community are expected to uphold the values of the school in all Social Media interactions. Staff, students and parents will not act in such a way that the image of NGPS is brought into disrepute nor in a way that harms members of the school community. It is expected NGPS staff, students and parents use Social Media in a respectful and responsible manner. Social Media should not be used to insult, present offensive or inappropriate content or to misrepresent NGPS or any member of the school community.

Aims:

The aim of the Social Media Policy is to set standards of behaviour and provide directions regarding acceptable use of Social Media that are consistent with the values and expectations of NGPS. NGPS aims to protect the safety and wellbeing of students, teachers and the school community.

Implementation:

This policy applies to the use of social media, including Facebook, whether work-related or personal use and irrespective of whether posts are made to private or public social media groups/sites. Comments and posts made on social media cannot be considered private and the misuse of social media can be very damaging to New Gisborne Primary School (NGPS) and the broader school community.

Misuse of any social media platform may involve:

- a breach of employment obligations
- serious misconduct
- sexual harassment
- unlawful discrimination
- a threat to the security of NGPS resources
- an infringement of the privacy of staff and other persons such as students or parents - disclosing personal information without consent may be a breach of Privacy laws
- a criminal offence and exposure to legal liability.

Any breach of this policy or misuse of NGPS's social media platforms, including the Parents Association Facebook Page, the school will undertake disciplinary action and each instance will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

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All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in a notification to police where the school is required to do so.

Rights and Responsibilities:

- Staff, students and parents are expected to show respect to all members of the school community.
- All persons engaging in the use of social media are expected to be aware of the following when using social media, whether for school-related, public or private purposes:
- Posts on social media are not confidential. Even if posts are made to a closed group, it is still possible for a member of that group to retransmit your post.
- Disparaging comments about NGPS must not be made on social media. Any suggestions, comments or criticisms are welcome received through the schools feedback mechanisms (including in-person meetings with school leadership representatives).
- Negative comments about NGPS can significantly damage the school, both in terms of its reputation and its ability to provide effective communication to all stakeholders. This risk of damage cannot be underestimated and individuals making such comments will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Conversations that take place on social media are always difficult to control and your posts can be misconstrued. Do not participate in social media conversations in any official NGPS capacity unless you are expressly authorised to do so.
- Don't respond to negative comments about NGPS, or individual persons associated with NGPS. If you become aware of negative comments or posts about NGPS, you should inform the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- If posts are made about you in relation to your role with NGPS, be particularly careful. Do not respond to negative comments, even if they are unfair, unjust or insulting. If you encounter any such comments, you should record them (for example by taking a screen shot) and report the matter to the Principal. NGPS supports its employees and volunteers and will investigate any such posts and take any necessary action.
- Any posts you make on social media that are critical of an individual (including a colleague or a NGPS school community member) can result in a defamation claim against you personally. If you make any such comments you are not acting in the interests of NGPS and you will be personally liable for the consequences of making any such comments.
- As a general rule, never post or respond to any material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful.

STUDENT GUIDELINES

When using Social Media, students are expected to ensure that they:

- Read and agree to the terms and conditions of various Social Media sites as many of them have age restrictions for their use. E.g. Facebook, Instagram and Gmail are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Are aware of what they are posting online and that Social Media sites and applications are public forums.

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- Are not permitted to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If students attempt to do this, the member of staff is to refuse the student access and inform the Principal. The student's parents will be informed if this happens.
- Will not access social networking sites during the school working day without permission from a member of the school teaching staff.
- Do not post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic, or incites violence against others.
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another person.
- Remain safe online and never give out personal information. This includes last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birth dates and pictures.
- Do not bully, intimidate abuse, harass or threaten others.
- Do not make defamatory comments.
- Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the school community
- Do not harm the reputation of NGPS or those within its community
- Do not upload video, audio or photographs of any member of the NGPS community (student, parents or staff) without seeking and gaining appropriate permission.
- Do not upload any video or photographs of any student where they can be identified as a NGPS student by their uniform or any other means.

PARENT GUIDELINES:

Classroom blogs and other Social Media tools like Seesaw open up communication between students, parents, teachers and the broader school community. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a large impact on learning at NGPS. The school encourages parents to participate in such activities when appropriate, but requests that parents act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be a model for our students as well.

Parents should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Be aware that many Social Media sites have age restrictions that DO HAVE implications for their primary aged children. Parents need to monitor their children's online social media activity and read the terms and conditions of various Social Media sites and applications their children are interested in using. Parents need to be aware that many of them have age restrictions for their use. E.g. Facebook, Instagram and Gmail are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Parents need to be aware that they are in breach of terms and conditions if they set up a personal account for their children to use if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply.
- Before uploading photos, audio or video, parents need to seek appropriate permission from any individual involved. This most particularly applies in relation to the privacy of the staff of NGPS
- Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents.

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- Be conscious of the fact that expert advice given is that all users of Social Media sites should do whatever they can to not identify any child by name or associate them with a particular school.
- Parents will be asked to sign a consent form for students when teachers set up social media activities for classroom for learning use.
- Parents will not attempt to destroy or harm any information online.
- Parents will not use classroom social media sites for any illegal activity, including violation of data privacy laws.
- Parents are highly encouraged to read and/or participate in social media activities. Parents should not distribute any information that might be deemed personal about other students participating in the social media activities. This includes photographs.
- Parents should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the NGPS community and its members.
- Parents assisting with classroom activities should not make use of social media sites while involved in such activities.

STAFF AND TEACHER GUIDELINES

Social Media in relation to staff and teacher relates to blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital images and video, instant messaging and mobile devices.

- Social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram must not be used by staff as a platform for learning activities with students.
- Staff should not accept students as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites.
- Staff and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.
- Staff are advised to NOT accept ex-students or parents of current students as friends on personal Social Media sites.
- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- While staff have permission to post photographs of students to the class blog or Seesaw they do not have permission to post details that would identify any child.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish online. Staff need to be mindful that what they publish will be public for a long time.
- Staff online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration consistent with the standards that apply on school premises and in accordance with the school's values and ethos.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the online world. If staff identify themselves online as affiliated with NGPS then they need to be aware that they are by definition representing the entire school community. Staff should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school and the school's values and ethos.
- Staff should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the NGPS community and its members.
- When contributing online staff should not post confidential student information.
- Staff should visit their profile's security and privacy settings on social networking sites. At a minimum, staff should have all privacy settings set to 'only friends'.

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MANAGING CHANGE AND ISSUES ARISING

- NGPS acknowledges that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the NGPS community has a concern or question pertaining to Social Media or Social Networking sites, this should be directed to the Principal.
- Parents, students or staff who have a complaint or issue arise from Social Media should contact the Principal.

Personal use of social media

NGPS staff and volunteers are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any social media platform. When in doubt, they should seek guidance from NGPS on how to comply with their obligations as an NGPS staff member or volunteer.

Reasonable/unreasonable personal use

When accessing Facebook via NGPS's internet, intranet and extranet systems, members must do so in accordance with NGPS's Electronic Media Usage Policy, which sets out the criteria for acceptable use. Access includes access provided via remote desktop access into NGPS systems.

Identifying inappropriate use

Any inappropriate use of social media or posts concerning NGPS should be reported immediately to the NGPS Principal.

Professional obligations

Teaching staff are reminded that in addition to their obligations to NGPS, they also have professional obligations that govern their conduct as teaching professionals as defined by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

Definition of terms:

In the context of this Policy, social media is the term used for internet based tools for creating, sharing and exchanging information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media tools may include (although are not limited to):

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, Youtube)
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs, Micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter)
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool)
Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Vod and podcasts
- Video conferences and web conferences
- Email and instant messaging
- All other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed periodically or in response to changes in relevant policies, external Standards, Guidelines and Legislation

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