

# Digital Technology and Social Media Policy

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| <b>Date Approved:</b>         | 1/08/2025 |
| <b>Scheduled Review Date:</b> | 1/07/2027 |
| <b>Policy Owner:</b>          | Principal |

## 1. Context & Purpose

The College considers that Digital Technologies are integral to the facilitation of the learning and teaching program. Digital Technologies include social media platforms, technologies and applications that enable users to communicate, create and share content or participate in social networking (Social Media). These platforms support people to publish and share information, ideas, views and discuss content.

The College believes that the use of Digital Technologies, including Social Media, allows the development of valuable skills and knowledge and prepares students to be ready for a digital and inter-connected world.

We embrace student agency and as a part of this, we seek to empower students to use Digital Technologies, including Social Media, to assist their learning and develop digital skills.

But this must be done with responsibility. The purpose of this policy is to support the acceptable, respectful, and beneficial use of Digital Technologies, including Social Media, while setting clear guidelines to avoid negative, disruptive or harmful activities.

## 2. Application

This policy applies to all students, staff and parents/carers.

## 3. Statement of Policy

The College recognises the importance of Digital Technologies and Social Media tools as a mechanism for both individuals and organisations to engage and share information.

Students at the College enjoy the opportunities and rewards that being a member of the College community brings. It is subsequently expected that students and parents/guardians will uphold the ethos of the College within and outside of the College and in all social media interactions. It is our policy that students, parents/guardians and staff will:



- use Digital Technology and Social Media in a respectful and responsible manner
- refrain from acting in such a way that brings the College into disrepute or in a way that harms members of the College community
- not insult, present offensive or inappropriate content
- not misrepresent the College or any member of the school community

We consider it is responsibility of all users to access and use Digital Technology in a safe and responsible manner and accordingly, require students and parents/guardians to sign our ICT - Acceptable Use Agreement.

The College may also put internet controls in place to limit access to certain activities and sites.

#### **4. ICT – Acceptable User Agreement**

All students and parents/guardian will be required to sign our ICT - Acceptable Use Agreement, which applies to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) within the College and to the use of student notebooks, desktops and all other devices using the College's operating system. This step will be completed as a part of the enrolment process.

Compliance with the ICT - Acceptable Use Agreement ensures a positive, supportive and productive learning environment for all students. Students are expected to always comply with the directions of staff in relation to this, including that they:

- not run any application unless directed by a teacher
- must report to a teacher any ICT problem immediately

Access to student notebooks, and the College's ICT network, resources and/or facilities will only be granted once that ICT - Acceptable Use Agreement has been signed.

#### **5. Social Media**

##### ***What is Social Media?***

Social Media includes, but is not limited to:

- social networking sites (eg, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- video, text and voice communication platforms (eg, MS Teams, Zoom, Webex, phones)
- video and photo sharing websites (eg, TikTok, Youtube)
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs (eg, WordPress, EduBlogs)
- micro-blogging (eg, Twitter, text messaging)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (eg, Whirlpool)

- wikis (eg, PBWorks, WordPress)
- instant messaging (eg, Instagram, Whatsapp)

### ***Expected Behaviour***

When using Social Media for College purposes or to support student learning or activities, staff, students and parents/guardians are expected to:

- ensure the use of Social Media can be linked to student learning and educational purposes
- respect the rights and confidentiality of others
- not impersonate or falsely represent another person
- not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others
- not post content or language that is obscene, offensive, defamatory, denigrating, hateful, threatening, pornographic or incites violence against others
- not engage in conduct that is “sexting” – see below
- not bring themselves, others or the College into disrepute

### ***Sexting***

Sexting is the sending or posting of provocative or sexual photos, messages or videos online. Sexting is treated differently under Federal and state or territory laws but in general, sexting will constitute criminal conduct when it involves students under the age of 18 and when it involves harassment or bullying. The creation and/or distribution of the images may also constitute child pornography. Where the College becomes aware of sexting involving minors Police will be notified, consistent with Ministerial Order 1359.

Victoria was one of the first states to make the sending of these images illegal. The laws are designed to send a clear message that the malicious use of intimate images to embarrass, and degenerate, a person is not acceptable and is a criminal offence.

### ***Staff - Personal Use of Social Media***

The Colleges appreciates that staff may use various Social Media in their personal lives.

This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit personal expression or online activities. However, the College asks staff to appreciate the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the College in certain circumstances via the personal use of social media when they can be identified as a college employee. Accordingly, staff should expressly state on any social media postings (where they can reasonably identify as a college employee) the stated views are their own and are not those of the College, and ensure that any content published is appropriate, accurate and not misleading.

As a general position, all staff need to make decisions about their use of Social Media that is consistent with their professional obligations. Staff must not:

- use or disclose any confidential or secure information obtained in their capacity as an employee of the College
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the College's reputation or bring it into disrepute
- post material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful
- state or imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of the College
- use their college email address, or College logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of their personal comment
- 'friend' or accept a 'friend' request from a student unless it is directly related to an approved educational outcome
- 'follow' a student unless it is objectively appropriate, for example where the student is also a family member of the staff member
- post images of students on their personal social media

If a staff member becomes aware that a student at the College is 'following' them on a personal social media account (where 'following' an account does not require permission from the account holder), the staff member must ask the student to 'unfollow' them and notify the College and/or parent/carer if the student does not follow that instruction.

## 6. Consequences for Breach

A breach of this policy or the ICT - Acceptable User Agreement will be considered by the College and dealt with on a case-by-case basis. It may also deal with the matter under its Behaviour Management Policy. All reports of cyber bullying, hacking and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in a notification to Police where the College is obliged to do so.

Possible responses for a breach of the Acceptable Use Agreement, could include one of more of the following:

- a discussion with the student and/or informing the parents/legal guardian
- loss or suspension of student access to the College's ICT network, resources or facilities for a period
- disciplinary action in accordance with the College's Behaviour Management Policy
- the College retaining possession of all the ICT equipment
- recovery by the College of any incurred costs or in serious cases, taking legal action
- cancellation of a student or parent/guardian ICT – Acceptable User Agreement
- informing the police if illegal material or activities are involved

Students, staff and parents should be aware that in certain circumstances, where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by Police over which the College will have no control.

Where a staff member breaches this policy the College may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

## 7. Awareness & Communication

The Policy will be available on the College's website and student management system. Students and parents/guardians will also be aware of their responsibilities by reason of signing the ICT - Acceptable Use Agreement.

All staff will be made aware of this policy and professional standards through staff induction and ongoing professional development.

## 8. Policy History

| Version | Policy Owner | Approval Date | Summary of Changes |
|---------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1       | Principal    | 20/6/23       | First Adopted      |
| 2       | Principal    | 01/08/2025    | Board Adopted      |