

## Good Shepherd Lutheran School

# Social Media Policy

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### **Introduction**

Good Shepherd Lutheran School acknowledges that part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning is adapting to changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning and sharing in these digital environments is an aspect of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. To this end, the School has developed the following policy to provide direction for employees, students and the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community when participating in social media activities.

The School accepts that the use of social media can be an effective business and social tool and that such media is commonly used by members of the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community to express their views, comments and ideas on a whole range of issues.

However, it is expected that all members of the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community should behave within and outside of the School in such a manner that the welfare of members of the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community are not adversely impacted upon nor is the reputation of Good Shepherd Lutheran School negatively affected or brought into disrepute.

Good Shepherd Lutheran School expects all those who are part of the School community, when using social media, to show courtesy and respect to others. It should not be used to abuse others, expose them to offensive or inappropriate content or to denigrate or show disrespect for Good Shepherd Lutheran School or members of its community.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set standards of behaviour for the use of Social Media that reflect our Lutheran ethos and are consistent with the broader standards and expectations of the Good Shepherd community. It is about creating an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community: staff, students and parents/caregivers.

### **Definitions**

Social Media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools which enable anyone (including private individuals) to publish or access information. Social media may include (although is not limited to):

- social networking sites e.g Facebook, LinkedIn, Bebo;
- video and photo sharing websites e.g YouTube, God Tube, Flickr;
- blogs including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- blogs hosted by media outlets e.g. comments on 'your say' on theage.com.au;

- micro blogging e.g. Twitter;
- wikis and online collaborations e.g. Wikipedia;
- forums, discussion boards and groups, e.g. Google Groups, Whirlpool;
- vod and podcasting;
- electronic messaging e.g. email, SMS;
- online multiplayer gaming platforms e.g. World of Warcraft, Second Life.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

A community can only function effectively when all members afford and treat each other with respect. Members of the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community are expected to show respect to others and the good name and reputation of Good Shepherd Lutheran School.

This policy is not intended to discourage nor unduly limit an employee's personal expression or online activities; however, potential for direct or indirect damage to be caused to others in our Community or the School through inappropriate use of social media is very real. As such a person's online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration that a person uses face – to – face, and be in accordance with the Lutheran Ethos of the School and the highest Professional Standards as outlined in, but not limited to, the Staff Code of Ethics and the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

All interactions between employees and students via Social Media platforms must only occur in an educational context and be fully transparent (that is readily accessible for viewing by the Principal, or Principal's delegate, at all times.) To this intent, employees are requested to provide, at the request of the Principal from time to time, a record of all passwords/access codes used in respect to Social Media platforms by students in the educational context.

Employees must not accept students as 'friends' on their social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites. Employees are advised to use professional discretion before accepting ex – students or parents of current students as 'friends' on their social network sites.

When using social media, it is expected that members of our community will:

- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries and behaviours.
- Demonstrate good digital citizenship.
- Ensure that their online behaviour reflects the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration that a person uses when communicating face – to – face.
- Respect the rights, privacy and confidentiality of others.
- Ensure all content published is accurate and not misleading.
- Consider whether how and what is posted reflects on their professional and personal character and the welfare of others.
- Not post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, violent, racist, sexist, pornographic, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful or might cause damage to the reputation of Good Shepherd Lutheran School or bring it into disrepute.

It is important to note that even with the strictest privacy settings, what a person 'says' online should be in keeping with the professional expectations outlined above. A 'private conversation' may still end up being shared in a more public domain, even with privacy settings engaged. As such, a person is always responsible for what they post, regardless of circumstances *or intention*.

### **Breach of this Policy**

Depending on circumstances, a breach of this policy may also involve a breach of other Good Shepherd policies and procedures, such as, but not limited to:

- ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- LEA Staff Code of Ethics
- Privacy Policy
- National Professional Standards

If a member of the Good Shepherd Lutheran School community encounters negative remarks about the School and/or its operations online they are required to pass this information onto the Principal.

All reports of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated and may result in a notification to the Police where the School is legally obliged to do so.

Any breach of this policy will be considered by the Principal as serious and will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Staff who breach this policy will be subject to disciplinary measures.

Parents who breach this policy may be asked to withdraw their child from Good Shepherd Lutheran School in those cases which adversely impact on the welfare of other members of the School community and/or the reputation of Good Shepherd Lutheran School, bringing it into disrepute.

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

### **References/Related Policies**

Hume Anglican Grammar Social Media Policy  
Peace Lutheran College Social Media Policy  
St. Andrews Lutheran College Social Media Policy

This policy was last ratified by GSLS school council February 2014