



Lansvale East Public School

Social Media Procedure

1. Objectives

Social media can be a powerful tool to facilitate and enhance communication and learning, as well as build connected communities. Employees of the department are subject to a level of public scrutiny over and above most other public sector employees because of their work with children. It is vital that they employ best practice in the use of social media.

2. Definitions

- a. For the purpose of all these definitions, and where mentioned throughout this document – the singular or plural versions of a word hold identical meaning (e.g. parent and parents).
- b. 'School' is defined as Lansvale East Public School.
- c. 'Parent' is defined as a parent, caregiver or legal guardian.
- d. 'Staff' is defined as any employee, volunteer or representative who is attached to the school.
- e. 'Department' is defined as NSW Department of Education.
- f. 'Social Media' refers to a range of online platforms and applications – such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites, and message boards – that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content.
- g. The term 'Official School Business' in a social media context refers to when a school employee is directly participating on behalf of the school and department. For example, a teacher might have administration rights to the school's primary *Twitter* account, and use it to publish important school notices, communicate with other schools, post promotional photographs/videos, etc.
- h. The term 'Professional and Personal Use' in a social media context refers to when a school employee chooses to create a type of social media account, and uses such account as part of their role as an educator. For example, a teacher might create a *Twitter* account in order to engage their students and school community.
- i. The term 'Personal Accounts' in a social media context refers to when a school employee uses a type of social media account for personal use/non-work related reasons.

3. Social Media Accounts for Official School Business

- a. The principal or another member of the school executive must approve in writing, all social media accounts which are used for official school business.
- b. For all social media accounts used for official school business, each account must include at least two members of staff, including an executive, which have administration rights and regularly monitor interactions.
- c. The rules of consent with regard to publishing photos of students apply, as they would for our website, newsletter and any other means whereby it may be reasonable to suspect a member of the public can view such material. A copy of the most up-to-date 'Permission to Publish' records are kept and consistently checked by the school, and due vigilance is maintained whenever material is posted or uploaded to any social media platform.
- d. In the event a photo without 'Permission to Publish' is posted in error, and a report is made to the school during regular school hours – the photo will be removed.
- e. Teachers should act on all reasonable requests by students or parents to have posts removed as soon as practical.
- f. Our school uses 'the rule of three', that is, social media posts will not include all three of the following elements:
 - i. The school's uniform
 - ii. The student's face
 - iii. The student's name

- g. Staff must not post a student's first and last name, unless one of the following are met:
 - i. The post contains text only.
 - ii. Approval from the principal has been granted.

4. Social Media Accounts for Professional and Personal Use

- a. Staff should engage themselves in a professional manner that upholds the reputation of the school.
- b. Communication between educators and students is only appropriate, when there is a valid educational context.
- c. Staff should be transparent and identify themselves as a department employee when discussing department related topics or issues. Comments should be apolitical, impartial and professional.
- d. As a legal safeguard, staff attached to the school are advised to add short disclaimer to their social media profile. For example: "All comments expressed are my own and not official statements from the NSW Department of Education."
- e. Staff should know and respect the terms of use of any social media community they have joined.

5. Social Media Accounts – Other

- a. Staff should be aware that they could be identified as an employee of the department from their online activities; despite whether the account used was for private or personal use, or was intended to be private and/or not seen by representatives of the department.
- b. Staff are advised not to 'friend' parents on Facebook or any other social media platform which has similar features as Facebook.
- c. Staff must not 'friend' or 'follow' students on Facebook or any similar social media platform.
- d. Staff should be mindful of time spent engaging on personal social media while at work.
- e. Staff must not post on personal accounts, images, video and/or any identifying information about students or department staff where the relationship between them predominantly stems from their work. However:
 - i. identifying information about other department staff can be posted on private accounts with their consent.
 - ii. Employees can share official department content that is publicly available.
- f. Where a gap exists in this procedure, staff are advised to refer to the department's *Social Media Implementation Procedures* and *Code of Conduct Procedures*.

6. Grievances

- a. Parents who have a complaint or concern are encouraged to advise the school.
- b. The first point of contact for parents should be the classroom teacher.
- c. If a resolution is not reached, parents should contact the principal.
- d. Parents are advised that a more comprehensive outline of how complaints are handled by the department can be found online, and is titled *School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure*.
- e. Complaints or concerns must not be raised through social media.
- f. Any parent making a complaint or raising a concern is expected to:
 - i. Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
 - ii. Provide complete and factual information; preferably in writing
 - iii. Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
 - iv. Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties