

# USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: INSTAGRAM & CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Mentone Primary School on 9583 2995 or [mentone.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:mentone.ps@education.vic.gov.au)



## RATIONALE

This policy and code of conduct has been created to guide the implementation of the Instagram page for Mentone Primary School (MPS). The purpose of the Instagram page is to ensure that with the platforms of Compass, they serve the role in strengthening the school community and enhance the wellbeing and connectedness of all community members in a positive and united way. The policy has been developed to define appropriate terms of use by parents and staff.

The Instagram page is a public, promotional and celebratory 'real time' platform:

- Photos of events, excursions, activities
- Achievements
- Awards and acknowledgements
- Updates

## SCOPE

This policy applies to MPS staff and parents/carers as their children's first role model when it comes to online behaviour and the safe and respectful use of social media.

## DEFINITION

Social media is the term used for internet-based tools for sharing information and ideas. It refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared and discussed over open digital networks. Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn & Twitter)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. YouTube, Instagram)
- Blogs, wikis, forums, discussion boards and groups
- Vod and podcasting
- Geospatial tagging (e.g. Foursquare).

## INTENTION

The intention of this policy is to establish a culture of openness, trust and accountability for school social media activities.

1. To ensure that DET and legislative requirements in relation to social networking and in particular, Instagram, are adhered to and that all users and moderators of the Mentone Primary School page are aware of these policies.

2. That all Instagram users and moderators are aware of appropriate usage guidelines and steps that will be taken to deal with inappropriate use.
3. To mitigate the risk of civil or criminal legal action and damage to Mentone Primary School reputation.
4. To ensure the smooth and successful running of the Mentone Primary School Instagram page and to promote Mentone Primary School as a best practice model of technological innovation and wider school community engagement.
5. This policy applies to the private, professional, classroom, and official use of social media by employees of the Department, Victorian Government school councils, departmental statutory authorities, contractors and volunteers, in schools, regions, and central offices.

## **POLICY**

Social media can provide an enjoyable way to socialise online and keep you connected with what is going on in your school community. While these technologies can be great for sharing ideas and keeping in touch, comments about your school community can have greater impact than expected and can have very real consequences for the reputations of individuals including teachers, principals, other parents, students and yourself.

There are also legal implications around what people are able to post and share about others. Victorian privacy law is complex yet essentially determines that posting or sharing personal information about another person online requires consent.

## **CONCERNS ABOUT THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Feedback and concerns about the use of school-related social media, including any social media that inappropriately references the school and its community members, can be reported to the school office administration team, Assistant Principal or Principal.

Where appropriate, concerns will be examined by the School Council which may:

- Communicate in writing to the person(s) responsible, providing an outline of the social media-based behaviours that have caused concern and advice on positive, restorative actions – such as referring to the procedures set out in the Parent Complaints Policy;
- Refer the matter to a relevant authority such as the eSafety Commissioner.

## **USAGE GUIDELINES**

### *Interacting*

1. Users will be unable to comment on the school's postings and on comments by other users. Users will be able to 'like' a post or comment by clicking on the like button.
2. Users will not be able to author a posting of their own or load media such as photos or videos unless they have administrative rights
3. Administrators will include Mentone Primary staff as appointed by the Principal and Assistant Principal and will be reviewed annually.
4. Our Instagram Page will serve as a platform for the exchange of school information, its programs and activities.

5. Compass will complement the Instagram Page and will still be used for emergencies, reminders, permission/events, attendance, daily happenings and school newsletter dissemination.

#### *Using of real names in posts*

1. No student's names are to be used in posts or comments. First name of adults only to be used.
2. MPS does not endorse children under the 13-year-old threshold imposed by Instagram to create their own Instagram account. Students should be supervised if viewing our Instagram Page and expect that community conduct on our Instagram Page will serve as a good role model for our students as to how to behave in social media spaces.

#### *Raising Issues*

1. Issues with the school Instagram page can be raised by contacting the principal using the school email address.
2. Issues involving any students, staff or other members of the community **MUST NOT** be communicated via Instagram.

#### *Moderating and Blocklisting*

1. Mentone Primary School reserves the right to set the strength level of the profanity filter and to add words and names to the page's blocklist.
2. The school reserves the right to ban any user from interacting with its Instagram page for breaches of the Code of Conduct.
3. All posts will be subjected to moderation in accordance with these provisions:

#### *Parents creating alias' or unknown/fake account following page*

1. Block unknown users
2. Remind community of code of conduct
3. Continued breaches – take down page and inform community why

#### *Page is hacked*

1. Remove comments
2. Remove page temporarily

#### *Students name or adult surname used accidentally*

1. Remove name from post.
2. Remove the page temporarily.

The Law and Instagram's Terms of Mentone Primary School page operates under the Commonwealth Telecommunications Act and Instagram's Terms and Conditions. Additionally, the Instagram Page is subjected to the Victorian Government/ Department's workplace occupational

health and safety guidelines including provisions relating to bullying and discriminatory behaviour. Please also refer to further information and support documentation below.

### *Implementation*

A copy of this policy is to be made available through the Mentone Primary School website.

1. All parents and community members who 'follow' the Mentone Primary School Page accept the terms and conditions of this policy and code of conduct.

### **TYPES OF USE**

The lines between work and personal life can become blurred for people working in the public sector since obligations under existing legislation and codes of conduct extend beyond the hours of work.

Private use refers to social media activity undertaken as a private citizen, normally using a profile linked to a personal email address. When making a comment in a private capacity, people covered by this policy must ensure that their comments are not perceived to be an official comment and do not compromise their capacity to perform their public sector role.

Professional use covers those activities and comments made on social media platforms for a professional purpose. For instance, a school-based activity on Instagram to support information sharing across the school community. Typically the school's Instagram page would be linked to the school's Outlook account.

Official use refers specifically to those activities undertaken by central and regional staff and others covered by this policy authorised to make comments made on behalf of the Department. These comments would typically be made via public-facing departmental social media sites such as the official twitter account, @deecd. Official use does not include comments made by employees of government schools on behalf of their school.

### **RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Staff and parents are expected to show respect to all members of the school community when communicating online.

Staff will: Plan for the inclusion of cyber safety awareness within the curriculum with guidance from relevant education authorities and curriculum documents. Follow all eSmart regulations and all Mentone Primary School staff social media guidelines when posting on school social media accounts.

Parents will: Engage with school social media accounts in a respectful manner and be a positive role model for their children in communicating online. For more information, please see **PARENT GUIDELINES** below.

### **CHILDSAFE STANDARDS**

Any social media posts on school accounts containing images or videos of students will be posted in accordance with current Victorian Childsafe standards.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/ministerial-order-870-child-safe-standards-managing-the-risk-of-child-abuse-in-schools.pdf>

## PARENT GUIDELINES:

Social media tools open up communication between students, parents and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a large impact on learning and promotion of Mentone Primary School. 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:

- 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 to interact with school accounts if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply.
- Do **not** share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- 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. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form upon enrolment for their child to be included in any school social media posts.
- Parents will not attempt to destroy or harm any information online. Parents will not use 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 & videos.
- Parents should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regard to the Mentone's community and its members.
- Parents assisting with school activities should not make use of social media sites while involved in such activities.
- Social media is to **not** be used for direct messaging your child/children's classroom teacher to ask general questions, arrange parent teacher meetings or log absences. These should be done via the school email account or Compass.

## SECURITY, PRIVACY & ACCESS

To avoid potentially breaching this policy or compromising the professional expectations of them as employees at the school, it is recommended that staff:

- Ensure the privacy settings of the school's social media profiles are appropriately set to avoid putting the privacy of themselves and students at risk (for example, minimum recommendation for Instagram accounts: settings set to "no comments" and "Direct Messaging Off" as these open your content to a large group of unknown people); and
- Recognise that even if they implement the maximum-security settings for their social media profiles, the security settings on social media forums cannot guarantee that communications placed online do not become more publicly available than was intended (employees should always assume that posts or communications online may become public). Employees must understand that the type of security settings used cannot excuse breaches of this policy if the material posted is inappropriate and becomes more publicly available than was intended.

- Follower lists of school accounts will be monitored to ensure that inappropriate accounts are removed and blocked.

## MANAGING CHANGE AND ISSUES ARISING

We acknowledge that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the Mentone's

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.

## POLICY STANDARDS

The following standards apply to all employees and other people covered by this policy<sup>1</sup> in their private, professional, and official use of social media:

1. DET employees, contractors and volunteers must maintain public trust and not bring the Department or the Victorian Government into disrepute
2. DET employees, contractors and volunteers must be perceived as unbiased and apolitical in line with the Code of Conduct for Victorian public sector employees
3. DET employees, contractors and volunteers must only make public comment on behalf of the Department when specifically authorised to do so
4. DET employees, contractors and volunteers are encouraged to share information with colleagues and the public, but must also protect private and confidential information obtained through their work
5. DET employees, contractors and volunteers must be inclusive, respectful, and uphold the CORE values of the Department

## SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION

- *DET : Acceptable use policy, Communications and Technology (ICT) Resources*  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/infrastructure/ictacceptableusepolicy.pdf>
- *Alannah and Madeline Foundation : eSmart* <https://www.esmart.org.au/what-is-esmart/>
- *DET: A Step-by-Step Guide for Responding to Online Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour Affecting Students*  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/health/lolincidents.pdf>
- *The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct*  
[https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/35604/Code-of-Conduct-2016.pdf](https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/35604/Code-of-Conduct-2016.pdf)
- *Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection*  
[https://www.cpdp.vic.gov.au/images/content/pdf/privacy\\_info/20170220\\_CPD\\_P\\_Social\\_Media\\_Privacy\\_FAQs.pdf](https://www.cpdp.vic.gov.au/images/content/pdf/privacy_info/20170220_CPD_P_Social_Media_Privacy_FAQs.pdf)
- *Social Media & You School - Top tips for positive and respectful online communication with your school community.*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/parentsocialmediaschoolcommunity.pdf>

#### STAFF SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES:

This policy should be read in conjunction with [Social Media Usage Guidelines \(Instagram\) - Staff](#)

#### EVALUATION

<b>Created date</b>	5/06/2022
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council, School Community via Google Form
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Principal
<b>Endorsed on</b>	4/9/2022
<b>Next review date</b>	4/9/2024