



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, YouTube and blogging represent a growing form of communication for schools and other education providers, allowing them to engage with their community and the wider public more easily than ever before.

However, it is also an area in which rules and boundaries are constantly being tested. This policy outlines what is expected of staff (including casual, volunteers, and contractors), parents, and students in relation to using social media in order to maximise our reach while protecting the reputation and legitimate interests of Wild Cherry School and Kindergarten and its governing body East Gippsland Steiner Education Group Inc.

PURPOSE

The aim of this policy is to build an understanding of what is appropriate and productive use of social media, to minimise miscommunication and prevent misuse of social media tools that will undermine Wild Cherry School or Kindergarten or East Gippsland Steiner Education Group Inc.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA AND WHY DO WE USE IT?

Social media is a collection of digital, internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information that facilitate conversations.

Wild Cherry School may choose to engage in social media such as:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Google+
- WordPress/Blogger
- YouTube/Vimeo
- iTunes/Podcasting

Wild Cherry School seeks to encourage information and link-sharing amongst its parents, staff and volunteers, and seeks to utilise the expertise of its employees and community in generating appropriate social media content.

At the same time, social media posts should be in keeping with the image that Wild Cherry School wishes to present to the public, and posts made through its social media channels should not damage the school's reputation in any way.

Due to the fast-moving nature of social media and the constant development of new social media programs, it is important that this policy and its procedures be reviewed at regular intervals.

CORE POLICY

Wild Cherry School's social media use shall be consistent with the following core values:

- **Integrity:** Wild Cherry School will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about its own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals. In addition, it will post in accordance with the school's child safe code of conduct and child safe and privacy policies.
- **Professionalism:** Wild Cherry School's social media represents the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone. Staff and volunteers may, from time to time and as appropriate, post on behalf of Wild Cherry School using its online profiles, but the impression should remain one of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals.
- **Information Sharing:** Wild Cherry School encourages the sharing and reposting of online information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to its members.

Wild Cherry School should seek to grow its social media base and use this to engage with existing and potential parents, stakeholders, and wider community. At the same time, a professional balance must be struck which avoids placing the school's reputation at risk.

Wild Cherry School and Kindergarten will respect the decision of parents who do not give permission in their child's enrolment form for images of their child to be included in social media.

AUTHORISATION

Board Secretary
East Gippsland Steiner Education Group Inc.
Date authorised: 23 October 2018

SOCIAL MEDIA PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board shall nominate a Communications Officer to co-ordinate Wild Cherry School's social media management.

The Communications Officer will oversee expansion of social media and help to develop the Social Media Strategy in line with the school's code of conduct, and child safe and privacy policies.

Staff and volunteers may, from time to time and where appropriate, post on behalf of Wild Cherry School using the school's online social media profiles. This is to be done only with the express knowledge and authorisation of the Communications Officer.

The Communications Officer has ultimate responsibility for:

- Ensuring that all posts are in keeping with the School's core Social Media Policy.
- Ensuring appropriate and timely action is taken to correct or remove inappropriate posts (including defamatory and/or illegal content) and in minimising the risk of a repeat incident.
- Ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken in repairing relations with any persons or organisations offended by an inappropriate post.
- Moderating and monitoring public response to social media, such as Facebook replies and blog comments, to ensure that trolling and spamming does not occur, to remove offensive or inappropriate replies, or caution offensive posters, and to reply to any further requests for information generated by the post topic.

It is important to maintain the balance between encouraging discussion and information sharing, and maintaining a professional and appropriate online presence.

Delegation

Social media is often a 24/7 occupation; as such, such responsibilities as outlined above may be delegated by the Communications Officer to another appropriate staff member/volunteer.

PROCESSES

Posting to social media

Before social media posts are made, volunteers and staff should ask themselves the following questions:

- Is the information I am posting, or reposting, likely to be of interest to Wild Cherry School and/or East Gippsland Steiner Education Group's members and stakeholders?
- Is the information in keeping with the interests of the School and its constituted aims?
- Could the post be construed as an attack on another individual, organisation or project?
- Would Wild Cherry School's community be happy to read the post?

Policies can be established or altered only by the Board: **Procedures** may be altered by the Principal.

- If there is a link attached to the post, does the link work, and have I read the information it links to and judged it to be an appropriate source and of appropriate content?
- If reposting information, is the original poster an individual or organisation that Wild Cherry School would be happy to associate itself with?
- Are the tone and the content of the post in keeping with other posts made by Wild Cherry School? Does it maintain the school's overall tone?

If you are at all uncertain about whether the post is suitable, do not post it until you have discussed it with the Communications Officer. A few moments spent checking can save the School big problems in the future.

Damage limitation

In the event of a damaging or misleading post being made, the Communications Officer should be notified as soon as possible, and the following actions should occur:

- The offending post be removed.
- Where necessary an apology should be issued, either publicly or to the individual or organisation involved.
- The origin of the offending post be explored, and steps taken to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future.

If the mistake seems set to grow, or to cause significant damage to the School's or East Gippsland Steiner Education Group's reputation, the Communications Officer will immediately notify the Principal/School Leader and the Board of Governors so collective remedial action can be taken.

Moderating social media

The reputation of Wild Cherry School is first and foremost, and this involves maintaining a safe and friendly environment for its community.

From time to time social media forums may be hijacked by trolls or spammers or attract people who attack other posters or the organisation aggressively. In order to maintain a pleasant environment for everybody, these posts need to be moderated.

Freedom of speech is to be encouraged, but if posts contain one or more of the following, it is time to act:

- Excessive or inappropriate use of swearing.
- Defamatory, slanderous or aggressive attacks on Wild Cherry School or its governing body East Gippsland Steiner Education Group Inc., other individuals, organisations, or public figures.
- Breach of copyrighted material not within reasonable use, in the public domain, or available under Creative Commons license.
- Breach of data protection or privacy laws.
- Repetitive advertisements.
- Topics which fall outside the realms of interest to the school and stakeholders, and which do not appear to be within the context of a legitimate discussion or enquiry.

If a post appears only once:

- Remove the post as soon as possible.
- If possible/appropriate, contact the poster privately to explain why you have removed the post and highlighting Wild Cherry School's posting guidelines.

If a poster continues to post inappropriate content, or if the post can be considered spam:

- Remove the post as soon as possible.
- Ban or block the poster to prevent them from posting again.

Banning and blocking should be used as a last resort only, and only when it is clear that the poster intends to continue to contribute inappropriate content. However, if that is the case, action must be taken swiftly to maintain the welfare of other social media users.

The decision to block, ban and remove posts ultimately lies with the Communications Officer, but may, at their discretion, be delegated to responsible staff and volunteers.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safe Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

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