
ESSEX HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

RATIONALE

Our School's main communication is through the Compass portal, the school's website, and the weekly newsletter. At Essex Heights Primary School (EHPS), we want to expand our communication reach with families and make connecting with our school more convenient. We wish our content to be more accessible and also to tap into the knowledge and support base of our parent community.

Our School's Social Media allows our community to keep up to date with activities through a channel preferred by many. Social Media is a place where we can build our community by building school spirit. We ask that our community accentuate the positives and bring to everyone's attention the little things that make our school community great.

POLICY STATEMENT

We will use Facebook as a communication device for our school community. The School reserves the right to suspend or cease using any social media channel at its discretion. Actions resulting in breaches to this policy may include prohibiting a user from interacting with the School's Social Media. Where there are issues of a potentially serious or criminal nature such as threats or inappropriate comments, the matter will be referred directly to the relevant governing body.

GUIDELINES

1.0 Responsibility

- 1.1 The school will create and authorise official EHPS sites on Social Media.
 - 1.1.1 Should unofficial sites come to the attention of the school, appropriate action will be taken to close those sites.
- 1.2 Social Media will be managed by the School Principal, who will oversee any delegated authority for managing and moderating the Facebook page.
- 1.3 The School Principal may appoint parent delegates to manage and moderate the Facebook page. The parents must possess a current Working with Children Check.

- 1.4 Inappropriate online behaviour may amount to a criminal offence under State and/or Commonwealth law. For example, it is illegal to use a network to menace or cause offence. Suspected criminal activity will be reported to the Victoria Police for investigation.

2.0 Implementation

- 2.1 **Relevant documents.** Social Media will be managed in accordance with the relevant legislation, terms and policies, including:

- *Information Privacy Act 2014*
- *Commonwealth Telecommunications Act 1997*
- Facebook's Terms (<https://www.facebook.com/terms>)
- Other relevant Social Media terms and guidelines
- The School's child-safe policy
- The School's staff and school council privacy policy
- The School's mobile phone, camera and electronic device policy

- 2.2 **Moderation and blocklists.** Essex Heights Primary School reserves the right to review all content and remove anything that is inappropriate, offensive or illegal, or at odds with our School's policies or values. We will set the strength level of profanity filters and may choose to add additional words and names to the page's blocklist.

2.2.1 If content is posted that is deemed inappropriate (including, but not limited to, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory, violent or illegal content), the content will be removed in accordance with the Bully Stoppers' Guide to removing inappropriate content from social media sites (Appendix 1).

- 2.3 **Support for affected students.** Where a student has been involved in inappropriate behaviour online (through their own actions or those of others), they will be supported by the school in line with the Bully Stoppers' Guide to online incidents of inappropriate behaviour affecting students (Appendix 2).

- 2.4 **Support for affected staff.** If any staff member is affected by the inappropriate use of social media, the School will support the staff member and encourage them to access the Department's Employee Assistance Program (1300 361 008).

- 2.5 **Prevention and intervention.** The School will prevent and intervene in inappropriate use of social media by the community according to the processes outlined in Appendix 3.

3.0 Community guidelines

- 3.1 **Interaction with the school’s Social Media.** Users will be able to comment on the School’s postings and on comments by other users. Users will also be able to ‘like’ a post or comment by clicking on the like button. Users will be able to author a post of their own or load media such as video or photos, but this will be checked by a staff member or nominated parent moderator before being published on the page. User rights will be reviewed intermittently and may be changed without notice.
- 3.2 **Use your real name when posting.** All users interacting with Essex Heights Primary School Social Media, by either liking or commenting on posts, must do so using an account that clearly identifies them by their real name.
- 3.3 **Do not identify children.** Protection of our students is paramount. While we are keen to include the children in our online community building, it is important that they are not easily identifiable. Names of children must not be used in any post or comment.
- 3.4 **Image consent.** Consent for publishing students’ images will be sought by the school at the start of each year or on enrolment.
- 3.5 **When to use names in posts.** You can use names of adults in posts with their express permission when you wish to acknowledge someone’s great work or community contribution. We expect Social Media to always be used for positive communication within our community.
- 3.6 **Do not raise issues.** We encourage relevant questions or comments to be added to posts. Any school issues or concerns are to be referred to the School directly, not raised on any Social Media.
- 3.7 **Underage Social Media users.** Essex Heights Primary School does not endorse children under 13 years of age having their own Social Media accounts. This is in keeping with Social Media Terms and Conditions for Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumble, KIK, Vine, Tinder, Yikyak and so on.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in 12 months or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstance.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Bully Stoppers’ Step-by-Step Guide to Removing Inappropriate Content from Websites or Social Media Sites

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/stepbystepincontent.pdf>

Appendix 2:

Bully Stoppers' Step-by-Step Guide: Online Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour Affecting Students

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/stepbystepconcernstudent.pdf>

Appendix 3:

Responding to inappropriate use of Social Media by the School Community

George Perini

Kristen Steer

Principal

School Council president

August 2017

Appendix 3

RESPONDING TO INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

BY THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Prevention

To prevent the inappropriate use of social media, the School will:

- Regularly communicate the School values: honesty, friendliness, inclusiveness, persistence and respect
- Encourage staff and students to model positive and respectful behaviour
- Have systems, policies and procedures in place to address and manage complaints and concerns promptly
- Implement appropriate, effective and timely communication strategies about school-based decisions and actions in order to manage expectations and behaviours

Intervention

The School will intervene in the inappropriate use of social media, and will:

- Identify and remove the inappropriate content
- Identify the person who is affected by the inappropriate content and take reasonable steps to support that person
- Identify the person who may be responsible for the content and:
 - Raise our concerns about the inappropriate content
 - Remind them of our School's values or the school policy that describes the behaviour expected in the school community
 - Provide the person with a more appropriate forum to raise their complaints or concerns
- Record the incident and the steps taken to respond to the incident

Should the School receive a complaint about inappropriate social media use, it will be investigated in accordance with the Department's *Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides*,

https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/contacts/policy_only_addressing_parents_concerns.pdf

Legal remedies

In some cases, online behaviour may amount to a criminal offence under State and/or Commonwealth law. For example, it is illegal to use a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence. It is also an offence to use the internet to stalk another person by publishing a

statement relating to the victim or material claiming to originate from the victim. Suspected criminal activity will be reported to the Victoria Police for investigation.

Some online behaviour may constitute threats, harassment or stalking, and it may be appropriate for the person affected to make an application for a personal safety intervention order. These applications can prohibit certain types of behaviour including:

- Coming within a specified distance of where a person lives or works;
- Making contact by telephone or email, or approaching the person; and
- Publishing any material online about the person.

If the online statements have wrongfully attacked an individual's reputation or standing in the community, that person may need to obtain independent legal advice about commencing a personal action in defamation if appropriate. The Department's legal division can provide further information about this.

Essex Heights PS

August 2017