



# MARIST COLLEGE ASHGROVE

A Catholic boys' day and boarding College in the Marist Tradition

## Social Media Policy

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ITEM	DESCRIPTION
<b>Policy description</b>	This policy outlines the procedures to be followed when using social media.
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## 1. Policy Statement

Marist College Ashgrove is committed to effective dissemination of information and communication within the organisation and with students, parents, Old Boys, stakeholders, and the media. All communication should support the overall values and aims of Marist College Ashgrove.

Marist College Ashgrove is a forward-thinking organisation that actively embraces social media, accepting that the use of social media can be an effective educational, business and social tool and that such media is commonly used by members of the Marist College Ashgrove community to express their views, comments, and ideas, on a whole range of issues. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube and blogging represent a growing form of communication for organisations, allowing them to engage their members and the wider public more easily than ever before.

However, this relatively new communications medium, requires clear guidelines to reduce the risk of unauthorised, incorrect or misleading information causing harm to the College's reputation.

## 2. Purpose

Marist College Ashgrove accepts that the use of social media can be an effective educational, business and social tool and that such media is commonly used by members of the Marist College Ashgrove community to express their views, comments, and ideas, on a whole range of issues.

This policy works in conjunction with other policies of Marist College Ashgrove including the Privacy Policy, the Staff IT Policy and Student IT Policy. As well as staff, students and parents, this policy also applies to Board members, volunteers and committee members, who act on behalf of the College.

The purpose of this policy is to inform and guide the way Marist College Ashgrove and its broader community use and interact with social media. This policy has been developed to protect the College's students, staff, assets and reputation through clear protocols for use of social media in official and personal capacities. In addition, the policy is in place to set standards for social media use which are consistent with the broader values, mission, aims and expectations of the College community.

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.

The policy covers three key aspects of social media use:

- The official use of social media tools by the College to communicate and interact with the School and wider community in regard to news and events at the College
- The use of social media by staff, students and parents in a personal capacity in relation to School matters or in a way that may be associated with the College
- Student Protection protocols



### 3. Policy Application

This policy works in conjunction with other policies of Marist College Ashgrove including the Privacy Policy, the Staff IT Policy, Student IT Policy and Code of Conduct. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the College's branding guidelines, which outlines the College's brand and house style. As well as staff, students and parents, this policy applies to all staff, students and parents, volunteers and committee members, who act on behalf of the College.

### 4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, social media refers to all social networking sites, services and tools used for creating, publishing, sharing and discussing information. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites: Facebook, Myspace, Google+, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Bebo, Instagram and Friendster
- Video and photo sharing websites: Content Communities such as Flickr and YouTube
- Micro-blogging sites: Twitter, Posterous, DailyBooth
- Instant Messaging: Skype, SMS, Whats App
- Geotagging: Foursquare
- Blogs: including corporate blogs and personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications;
- Podcasts: including corporate podcasts and personal podcasts
- Forums and discussion boards: e.g. local discussion boards, Whirlpool, Yahoo!
- Groups or Google Groups
- Virtual Game Worlds: e.g. World of Warcraft
- Virtual Social Worlds: e.g. Second Life
- Online encyclopaedias: e.g. Wikis such as Wikipedia, Geo-wiki, GeoNames and Google Sidewiki
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools, (together called Social Media).
- SPO – Student Protection Officer
- Anonymous profile: includes but is not limited to a social media profile that is de-identified, uses a pseudonym, nickname or a fake profile picture that is utilised to subvert this policy.
- Associated profile: includes a social media profile of a close friend or relative of a person who would otherwise be subject to this policy that is used to subvert this policy.

#### 4.1 Relevant Legislation

The laws that apply in the 'real world' also apply in cyberspace. Although there are several benefits that social media can bring to both personal usage and College purposes, there are certain risks and implications. While the law has not entirely caught up with technology and there is no one specific piece of legislation that regulates social media sites and the use of social media, it is important to keep in mind that what Marist College Ashgrove community members communicate via social media, can have real world legal consequences.



Examples of Acts that may be associated with the use of social media:

- [Fair Work Act 2009](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999](#)
- [Criminal Code Act 1899](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- [Copyright Act 1968](#)
- [Telecommunications \(Interception and Access\) Act 1979](#)
- [Telecommunications\(Carrier Licence Charges\) Act 1997](#)
- [Cybercrime Legislation Amendment Act 2012](#)
- [Copyright Amendment \(Digital Agenda\) Act 2000](#)
- [Copyright Amendment \(Moral Rights\) Act 2000](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2006](#)
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Act 2001](#)
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulation 2001](#)

Staff are advised that social media conversations may also be covered within College policies pertaining to privacy, defamation and intellectual property. College community members need to be aware of the concept of leaving a “digital footprint”, i.e. communication via social media and email, is virtually indelible.

## 5. Principles

### 5.1 Official School Use of Social Media

Only employees authorised by the Headmaster may create social media identities, profiles or accounts that use the College’s name, crest or brand, or are designed to represent the College in any way. Only these employees may officially represent Marist College Ashgrove, in the authorised social media platforms, as outlined in this policy.

Employees authorised to use the College’s official social media platforms must:

- Maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected in a physical work environment
- Behave impartially and professionally
- Behave with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- Deal appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- Be sensitive to the diversity of colleagues, peers, students and the community
- Take reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest or perceptions thereof
- Uphold the values of Marist College Ashgrove
- Protect the integrity and reputation of Marist College Ashgrove, its students, parents and staff
- Comply with applicable laws and legislation, including copyright, intellectual property, privacy, financial disclosure, defamation and other such applicable laws
- Protect the privacy and security of Marist College Ashgrove, its employees, students, parents, partners and suppliers
- Assist and support the achievement of the College’s strategic objectives
- Not knowingly provide incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about the College’s own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals



- Represent the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone

Staff and volunteers may, from time to time, and with appropriate approval, communicate on behalf of Marist College Ashgrove, but the impression should remain one of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals.

Staff and students posting comments on official College or College related communications should observe the standards of conduct and behaviour above. Marist College Ashgrove reserves the right to delete or remove any comments we find inappropriate or offensive. We reserve the right to delete any comments that promote other products or services.

Content communicated via social media should be consistent with the values, mission, aims and expectations of the College community, as well as the College's official key marketing messages.

Authorised employees in the Marketing & Communications Department using social media in an official capacity are given autonomy to represent Marist College Ashgrove's views in an ongoing conversation with the public, parents and students.

There are occasions when content must be reviewed by Senior Management. This includes, but is not limited to, content that is:

- Politically sensitive
- Associated with a project or activity deemed to be high risk
- A response to an individual or group that is deemed to be high risk, or
- Directly quoting another staff member (e.g. a response attributed to the Headmaster)

Information published via social media is a public record and a corporate record for recordkeeping purposes.

## **5.2 Responsibilities of Staff, Students and Parents**

Staff, students and parents using social media in a personal capacity must take due care to ensure that any comments, opinions, photographs or contributions made online are their own, as private citizens, and cannot be interpreted as an official statement or position of Marist College Ashgrove.

Staff, students and parents are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected in a physical/work environment. The reputation of Marist College Ashgrove is to be safeguarded by all those connected to the College (employees, contractors, parents and students). Criminal behaviour online will be reported to the Police.

## **5.3 College Leadership Team & Curriculum Leaders**

The College Leadership Team and Curriculum Leaders are to:

- Develop and implement educational programs for students and where appropriate encourage parents to cultivate ethical digital citizenship



- Investigate any reports of online bullying or inappropriate postings and to implement sanctions commensurate with the scale of the incident, in line with the College Bullying Prevention & Intervention policy
- Ensure that filtering systems are maintained that help ensure websites and emails viewed on College computers are appropriate for children
- Report all breaches of this Policy to the Headmaster (or delegate)
- Ensure this policy is understood by staff for whom they have a supervisory responsibility
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis.

#### **5.4 Staff**

All Staff of the College and student online interaction must only occur for the purposes of learning.

- Staff must not accept students as friends on Facebook or similar social media sites nor are they to set up private groups with students
- Staff are advised to use professional discretion and prudence before accepting ex-students or parents of current students as friends
- Staff, students and parents must behave ethically when interacting online and will be held accountable for their actions inside and outside of school hours where their actions have a negative impact on the well-being of students and staff and the reputation of the College
- Social networking sites such as Facebook or similar must not be used as learning tools for students
- Online activities should not interfere with the job performance of any employee
- Staff members must not post photos or information via their personal social media accounts that have been obtained because of the privilege of their position at the College
- Staff are not permitted to use the College's logo or create College branded accounts which could be interpreted as representing the College unless permission has been granted by the Headmaster.
- Staff must regularly review profile and privacy settings of their own personal social media sites to prevent inadvertent disclosure of their personal information to members of the College community
- Staff are encouraged to use the highest privacy settings of all sites accessed. At a minimum, teachers should have full privacy settings set to "only friends"
- Staff are required to report to their supervisor instances of current students trying to befriend them through social media sites as a measure of disclosing contact. This is to protect teachers against allegations of grooming of minors
- Staff should consider the impact of any social media content on their own career or that of their colleagues (e.g.: "liking" a questionable page)
- College email addresses are not to be shown on social media sites
- Confidential information about any member of the College community must not be disclosed
- Staff should be mindful of improper associations that could damage the reputation of the College
- Information/materials that may cause disrepute or embarrassment for employees or the employer, students or their families must not be posted online
- Caution must be used when installing external applications that work with social networking sites e.g. calendar programs and games



- Students' privacy when posting online must be respected. Express permission must be obtained from the parents and the College before any postings are made that include faces or images of students
- The Headmaster (or delegate such as the Marketing & Communications Department) has permission to use images of students on the College's social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Staff must not discuss or share workplace documents online (e.g. Google Docs, Scribed, Facebook, and Twitter) with non-College staff, whether confidential or not
- The use of the College logo is permitted on LinkedIn profiles, provided that the profile is professional and accurate. This recognises that the purpose of LinkedIn is for professional use only. All other aspects of this policy apply to the use of LinkedIn. Comments that are posted with a LinkedIn profile must be appropriate in light of this association with the College
- Staff must ensure that any associates of staff eg: partners, husband, wife, children does not discuss or share any information from the workplace, or speak/post on behalf of the College

## 5.5 Students

Students are/should be:

- Responsible for using online media in accordance with criminal law, copyright law, the Staff IT Policy, Student ICT Policy and Student Code of Conduct
- Guided not to share their personal information with those who have not earned their trust or those they have not met face to face
- Respectful of the dignity and privacy of other members of the College community.
- Students are not to use social media for;
  - Posting, viewing or distributing pornography
  - sexting
  - online harassment or bullying
  - outing
  - exclusion
  - slander/defamation
  - cyber stalking
  - masquerading

Students must report any incident involving the points listed above. Incidents can be reported to the Head of Students, Deputy Headmaster, Marketing & Communications Department or the Headmaster.

Students should:

- Consider the impact of any social media content on their own career or that of their friends
- Not use their school email address for social media sites
- Not falsify their age in order to sign up for social media sites used for educational purposes that have age limits
- Not record personal details on public sites used for educational purposes
- Not share their College user name or passwords with anyone
- Comply with copyright regulations - students are advised to read the copyright agreements of online providers
- Not post material that would cause disrepute or embarrassment for staff of Marist College Ashgrove, other students or their families



## 5.6 Parents

Parents are:

- Responsible for using online communications with other members of Marist College Ashgrove community lawfully and respectfully
- Responsible for monitoring the online activities of their children when they are not at School
- Responsible to report to a member of the Senior Management Team any incidents of inappropriate online activity (listed above). Incidents can be reported to the Deputy Headmaster, Head of Students, the Marketing & Communications Department or the Headmaster. Depending on the nature of the evidence supplied with the report and the seriousness of the incident, appropriate resources will be allocated to investigations
- Required to be familiar with this policy and ensure that their children understand and comply with this policy
- Required to not post material that would cause disrepute or embarrassment for staff of Marist College Ashgrove, students or their families
- Complaints regarding the College or members of staff should be directed through the complaints policy, not via social media

Any social media page which represents the College that has not been created by the College needs approval by the College's Marketing & Communications Department, please contact the College on [communications@marash.qld.edu.au](mailto:communications@marash.qld.edu.au). All social media pages require the College to be listed as one of the Administrators. Non-compliance with this policy will be seen as a breach of policy.

Parents should understand that publishing defamatory comments about Marist College Ashgrove staff – either with or without direct identification of the staff member, or in the form of a question, comment or complaint – is illegal.

The College's Facebook Page has been set up to share news and events with our extended community. We invite you to communicate with members of Marist College Ashgrove community and other fans to share your thoughts and experiences of the College.

Our Facebook page is managed by the College's Marketing & Communications Department and the page is monitored and checked daily. If you have an urgent or particular enquiry, please contact the Marketing & Communications Department on Ph: 07 3011 1389.

Abusive or offensive comments or language, as well as commercial solicitations, will not be tolerated and will be removed. People who are continually detrimental to others' enjoyment of this page risk being permanently removed as fans. Fake or anonymous posts will be deleted.

We also expect you to abide by Facebook's own terms and conditions <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>.



## 5.7 Anonymous and Associated Profiles

The use of an anonymous or associated profile does not exempt any person covered by this policy from complying with the policy.

- If a person who would otherwise be covered by this policy can be reasonably identified as the person responsible for the posts of an anonymous profile, then that person will be subject to this policy
- If a person who would otherwise be covered by this policy can be reasonably identified as the person responsible for the posts of an associated profile, then that person will be subject to this policy

Reasonable identification includes but is not limited to the situations listed below. When the anonymous or associated profile:

- Posts information relating to events, discussions or documents that the person covered by this policy would have knowledge of
- Posts statements that are consistent with the wording previously used by the person covered by this policy
- Continues a pattern of behaviour that the person has previously engaged in before the anonymous or associated profile engaged in such behaviour
- Involves the “friends” of the person who would otherwise be covered by this policy in discussions and “likes” etc

## 6. Breach of Policy

Unacceptable use of social media may be a breach of enrolment, employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination or some other contravention of law. Where it is considered that a breach of policy has occurred, disciplinary action may be considered and could take the form of formal counselling, written warnings or termination of employment or enrolment.

Non-compliance with this policy by an employee may be grounds for disciplinary action, which could lead to termination of employment, depending on the severity of the breach.

Non-compliance with this policy by a student may be grounds for disciplinary action or expulsion, depending on the severity of the breach. Such instances will be investigated in line with fair process.

Parents who breach this policy may also in appropriate cases be asked to withdraw their child from the College. Any breach of this policy by staff will be considered by the Headmaster or delegate, and will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Marist College Ashgrove employees, students and parents who use social media in their own time using their own resources should note that their private comments posted publicly could potentially have repercussions. Such instances will be reviewed on a case-by case basis with consideration to the possible damage to the reputation of Marist College Ashgrove.

For any criminal breach of this policy, the Police will be called to investigate.

