Social Media Policy

ST CHARBEL’S COLLEGE
Social Media Guidelines

Related Policies

- Communication Devices Staff and Student Use Policy
- Code of Conduct

Introduction

College Staff have access across a range of education and public policy areas. Staff should be encouraged to engage in the conversations that are taking place every day in public forums made more accessible through online social media.

Social media is a group of online 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. Conversations in social media are a dialogue, an opportunity to listen, share, collaborate and respond to our colleagues and communities.

Overview

The College recognises the importance of participating in these conversations. Because the social media space is relatively new, and comments may be public and potentially permanent, we’ve developed these guidelines to support staff as they engage in any conversations or interactions using digital media for official, professional and personal use.

The guidelines promote responsible use and can be summarised as:

- Know and follow relevant College Policies including the Communication Devices Staff and Student Use Policy and the College Code of Conduct
- Be honest
- Be polite and considerate
- Use common sense
- Be apolitical and impartial when using social media for official and professional use
- Demonstrate College education values (fairness, respect, integrity and responsibility).
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Guidelines

These social media guidelines promote College employees’ responsible use of media. They are provided to support staff as they engage in digital media conversations and interactions for official, professional and personal use.

These guidelines also provide direction for establishing College social media networks, blogs, microblogs, message boards or image and video sharing sites.

- Know and follow relevant College Policies including Communication Devices Staff and Student Use Policy and the College Code of Conduct
- Remember whatever you publish on your personal account is yours and can have consequences for you personally.
- Failure to abide by these guidelines, the Communications Device Policy and the Code of Conduct could put you at risk.
- Also follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites.
- Be aware when you mix your work and personal lives. The lines between your personal and professional lives are blurred in online social networks; as are what might be considered ‘public’ versus ‘private’ boundaries.
- Your role with the College creates an association between what you say online and the College itself. Be sure that the content you publish is consistent with your work and our professional standards.
- Be transparent and identify yourself when discussing College-related topics or issues. If you are publishing content related to your work, identify that you are a College employee.
- If your comments are not made on an official College social media account, be clear it’s your personal opinion. As an identified College employee, your comments should be apolitical, impartial and professional.
- Consider what you say, before you say it. If you’re uncertain about something, don’t publish! Make sure it’s correct before you post and seek advice if in doubt. Check your spelling and grammar – your professional credibility is inextricably linked to your online comments.
- Be original and respect copyright, it is critical that you show the proper respect for copyright laws and fair use of copyrighted materials owned by others, including user-generated content. Acknowledge your source – it’s also good practice to link to other people’s work.
- Use discretion. In your efforts to be transparent, you need to take care not to publish information that should not be made public. If you are not responsible for the
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information, ask permission to publish content that isn’t already in the public domain. Avoid discussion of industrial or legal issues, and refer these to the principal if asked to comment specifically. Content published on the internet is widely accessible if you are in doubt about whether information can be made public, seek advice.

• Play fair: be polite, be considerate. Adopt a polite and considerate tone and avoid crossing the line from healthy debate into attack. Be sure to make it clear that your views and opinions do not necessarily represent the official views of the College.

• Produce content about your area of expertise. Whenever possible make sure you produce content about your areas of expertise, as they relate to the activities of the College. If you are responding to a question that falls outside your area of expertise, state that it isn’t your area of expertise and that you’ll follow up. Seek advice from the appropriate area within the College to develop a response.

• Share your thoughts and opinions in a personable way. Listen to what people are saying, avoid ‘lecturing’, and produce content that’s open-ended and invites response. Actively encourage people to submit comments. Be plain-speaking, informal but respectful, empathetic, friendly, positive, concise and honest.

• Admit your mistakes. If you make a mistake, be quick to admit and correct it. If you are correcting a mistake do so, but indicate the change you’ve made. If it is more serious and could lead to legal action, contact legal services for advice.

• Make sure that your personal online activities don’t interfere with your job performance. Be mindful of personal time spent on social media at work. Used well, social media provides excellent opportunities for professional networking, ideas exchange and customer feedback.

• If it’s official College communication, be dedicated, be constant. If you decide it’s appropriate to use social media for official College communication, you need to get permission from the principal first, then ensure appropriate approvals. Make sure it is part of an overall communication plan, listen to what people are saying and have someone champion the account to keep the conversation going. An untended conversation can send the wrong message, so if you don’t have the resources to maintain it, don’t do it.

• Official College social media accounts need to be approved by the principal or his delegate. All official accounts must be registered with the principal and communication and activity will be reported through to the executive. College accounts may be listed and cross-promoted on other College platforms. Personal accounts may not be listed or cross-promoted on College platforms unless approved by the principal.

Reference
Social media and technology guide for staff, NSW Dept of Education 2011