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Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This policy is applicable to all Department for Education and Child Development (the department) employees, volunteers and contractors.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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REVISION RECORD

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27/04/2012	1	

1. TITLE: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The use of social media¹ websites and applications by organisations as a means of communication has grown rapidly over the last few years. Social media is a legitimate tool for aiding communication and enhancing teaching and development.

The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development (the department) endorses and encourages the use of social media.

This policy aims to raise the opportunities that social media presents for communication and learning, and balance these with the risks that come with the use of any new technology and consideration of the needs of children, particularly vulnerable children².

3. PURPOSE

The intention of this policy is to establish a culture of transparency, trust and integrity in social media activities and to encourage the integration of social media into our teaching and learning environments.

This policy recognises that all communication by department staff will comply with the standards of conduct and behaviour as outlined in the [Code of ethics for the South Australian public sector \(2009\)](#), The accompanying *Social media guidelines for schools and preschools* provides questions with answers to help leaders with the practical implications of introducing and managing social media platforms. It also provides some information that may be useful for staff to help children and young people in the application and safe use of social media. [Cyber safety: Keeping children safe in an online world](#) aims to assist staff to put in place policies and procedures that both protect and inform children and young people, and their parents/ carers.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors working within or for the department who use a social media platform in their professional capacity in preschools or schools, or who identify themselves as a departmental employee, volunteer or contractor in a personal capacity. It has been developed to assist staff members to use social media to:

- engage internally with staff or with the wider community as a communications tool
- showcase children's and students' work
- integrate with, and facilitate teaching and learning
- administer social media platforms in an authorised capacity, or, make contributions in a professional or personal capacity on education-related issues.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are compatible with the [Code of ethics for the South Australian public sector \(2009\)](#) and the [SA Government's social media: Guidance for agencies and staff \(2010\)](#).

¹ See section 9 of this document for a definition of 'social media'

² See section 9 of this document for a definition of 'vulnerable children'

6. POLICY DETAILS

6.1 Information and communication technology requirements for establishing social media activities and profiles

Site information and communication technology (ICT) coordinators and principals have the ability to set and control the ICT environment necessary to allow the use of social media while ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place, to the best of their abilities.³ When setting and maintaining the establishment of social media the following departmental policies must be adhered to: [ICT Standard – Acceptable use policies for schools, preschools and children’s services sites and ICT security](#). The *Acceptable use* policy reinforces to users the type of behaviours that are appropriate whilst using departmental ICT facilities and services. Adherence to these policies must be in the form of a written agreement and signed by staff, students and/or parents/ guardians (as appropriate). This agreement must outline the terms and conditions of using departmental ICT facilities and of online behaviours and access privileges, and consequences for non-compliance. In the case of students, involving parents/guardians in these agreements reinforces the fact that the agreement is taken seriously and is part of the partnership between school and home. A significant element of an acceptable use agreement is to emphasise strategies for personal safety.

The Online Communications Services Unit is responsible for approving all social media activity within Central Office and regional offices, or delegating authorisation as appropriate.

6.2 Professional use of social media

When posting online to an official departmental social media platform:

- be aware of the specific social media channels and etiquette and understand the views and feelings of the target community
- ensure all material published is respectful of all individuals and the department and/or specific social media site and not publish any material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, breaches a Court Suppression Order, or is otherwise unlawful
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading
- ensure all information posted or comment made on government policy is appropriate to the individual’s area of expertise and authority, remains politically neutral and does not breach any confidentiality guidelines and that a person is not the first to make a significant announcement (unless specifically given permission to do so)
- respect copyright laws and attributing work to the original source wherever possible
- protect personal details
- use government branding in accordance with the Government of South Australia branding guidelines
- ensure any young people involved understand the rules of operation of each social media site, and measures are in place to protect them from any potential risks.

³ The Department for Education and Child Development *Social media guidelines for schools and preschools* in section 3 of this document may provide some useful information to assist with practical implementation of social media platforms.

For guidance on when departmental staff may use the Government's name to endorse companies, products, opinions or causes, please refer to the [DPC Circular 023: Private Sector Endorsements on Government Public Communications](#).

If staff notice inappropriate or unlawful online content relating to the department or content published in breach of this policy, this should be reported to the Online Communication Services Unit via email (DECD.socialmedia@sa.gov.au) or by phone 8226 2068 during office hours. If an issue occurs after normal business hours and you believe the situation requires urgent attention please contact the South Australia Police on 131 444 and follow their advice.

6.3 Children, students and social media

Incorporating new and emerging media into development and learning is important to enable our young people to learn how to navigate their global community. Staff members have an obligation when introducing young people to any new media to ensure, to the best of their abilities, that their safety is protected. When introducing social media site leaders need to set up processes which enable discussions and strategies to help young people use social networking tools effectively and safely. Processes need to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children, including those children in State care are appropriately addressed.

Staff members are responsible for maintaining a professional role with students. This means establishing clear professional boundaries with students that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of professional relationships. [Protective practices for staff and their interactions with children and young people \(2011\)](#) contains examples which will assist departmental staff in establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries. Most importantly, teachers must not have children or young people in their education community as 'friends' on their personal/private sites. However, wherever possible, it is appropriate to build a social media presence (eg, Facebook) for the site, or the classroom, or the subject within the class, and then set rules and guidelines about its use and monitor its content. It is advisable to set up class groups as closed groups, so that permission needs to be given by the page administrator to gain access.

[Cyber-safety: Keeping children safe in a connected world](#) provides guidelines to assist leaders, educators and parents to promote learning, protection and safety.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Central Office	• Administer Central Office online policies & procedures
Online Communication Services	• Provide strategic advice, support and development of social media applications and tools
	• Maintain and publish content to the official departmental social media accounts
	• Co-ordinate the availability of support materials and tools to support staff in their use of social media
	• Develop and maintain appropriate standards, guidelines and tools for social media usage
	• Manage and monitor Central Office social media platforms
	• Refer enquiries to the Strategic Communications Unit

	<p>when advice on target audiences, key messages and branding is required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist site leaders/ ICT professionals with any issues with social media implementation and use.
<p>Principals/line managers/ICT coordinators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure approval for social media activity from principal/director (site staff) or the Online Communication Services Unit (Central Office and regional office staff) • Ensure the IT requirements for establishing social media activities and profiles are in place (see 6.1) • Broadly consult with the community to be affected by social media before establishing new media use • Ensure cyber-safety use agreements are in place for all staff, children and students • Ensure that staff understand and comply with this policy • Provide relevant training to carers/teachers and young people who will be using social media • Ensure protective practices are in place to safeguard carers/teachers and students • Provide opportunities for staff and students to identify and report offensive online material or behaviour • Act to quickly remedy issues when they arise and support staff and young people through these processes • Model best practice social media usage • Ensure that IT access has appropriate safeguards in place to protect students
<p>Teaching/children's services staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure approval has been granted for social media activity from the relevant principal/ director • Teach topics contained in Keeping safe child protection curriculum • Teach strategies to maintain a positive online presence and protect identity • Teach children and students how to identify and avoid inappropriate materials • Ensure that the site conforms with State Office branding standards and clearly identifies your site
<p>Children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the cyber-safety use agreement of the school • Avoid any involvement with material or activities that could put at risk personal safety, or the privacy, safety or security of the school or other members of the school community • Apply cyber-safety strategies and instructions when using social media

8. DEFINITIONS

9.1 Social Media

Social media (sometimes referred to as 'social networking') are online services and tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information. The list of social media types is extensive with new and innovative social media sites being developed almost every day. Staff can determine what social media platform adds value to their particular need. This list is provided as a guide to the types of social media currently available:

- *Social networking sites*: are websites that allow you to create a personal profile about yourself and then chat and share information with others such as family and friends eg, Facebook, Edmodo, Myspace, LinkedIn, Yammer)
- *Video, audio and photo sharing websites*: are sites that allow you to upload and share videos, sounds and photos which can be viewed/heard by web users the world over eg, Flickr, YouTube, iTunes U, Vimeo, SoundCloud
- *Blog*: A blog (short for web log) is a kind of online diary, where you regularly post about your life, your hobbies, business, news or other interests. It is a way of having your own space in the virtual world eg, WordPress, Blogger
- *Microblogging apps*: are websites that post micro-blog like posts to announce what you are currently doing eg, Twitter, Yammer, Tumblr
- *Location-based apps*: (also known as *Geolocation*) are applications with the capability to detect and record where you and other people are located
- *Wikis*: are websites where users create, edit and share information about a particular subject or topic eg, Wikipedia, Wikispaces
- *Online gaming*: are games played over some form of computer network and are often based around a community of users eg, Steam
- *News aggregation*: news aggregators provide a list of the latest news stories published by users from a range of different web sites eg, Digg
- *Ning*: an online platform for people and organisations to create custom social networks around specific interests. Ning offers the ability to create an invited closed community website with a customised appearance and feel, feature sets such as forums, blogs, photos, and videos
- *Forums or message boards*: are online discussion sites where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages
- *Online multiplayer gaming platforms*: are multiplayer video games which are capable of supporting hundreds or thousands of players simultaneously and usually feature at least one persistent world (eg, World of Warcraft).

8.2 Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children, in the context of this social media policy, refer to those children whose circumstances and/or personal characteristics place them at increased risk of harm when using social media. This may include children under Court Orders where contact between a child and another person, including a family member may be unlawful eg, children under the Guardianship of the Minister, children subject to a Witness Protection Order, or children subject to a Family Court Order.

9. RELATED POLICIES

SA Government and DECD policies and guidelines that may be read in conjunction with this policy:

SA Government - Code of ethics for the South Australian public sector

<http://www.espi.sa.gov.au/files/CodeOfEthicsFinal.pdf>

SA Government - Endorsements - DPC Circular 023: Private sector endorsements on government public communications

<http://www.premcab.sa.gov.au/pdf/circulars/Endorsements.pdf>

SA Government - Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986

<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/OCCUPATIONAL%20HEALTH%20SAFETY%20AND%20WELFARE%20ACT%201986/CURRENT/1986.125.UN.PDF>

SA Government - Social media: Guidance for agencies and staff

<http://www.espi.sa.gov.au/socialmedia-guidelines.php>

DECD Policy – Electronic mail access and use

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DECDPolicyEmailAccessandU.pdf>

DECD Policy – ICT Security

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DECDPolicyIctSecurity.pdf>

DECD Policy – Internet access and use

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DECDPolicyInternetAccessa.pdf>

DECD Information management policy – custodianship and ownership

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DECDInformationManageme-1.pdf>

DECD Information management policy – privacy and confidentiality

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DECDInformationManagement.pdf>

DECD Guideline – Cyber-Safety: Keeping children safe in a connected world

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf>

DECD Guideline – Practical guide for the use of email and the internet

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/PracticalGuidefortheUseof.pdf>

DECD Guideline – Protective practices for staff in their interactions with students (guidelines for schools, preschools and out of school hours care)

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf>

DECD Standard – Acceptable use policies for schools, preschools and children’s services sites

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DECDStandardAcceptableUse.pdf>

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