DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
learners first

Social Media Policy

Tasmanian
Government

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Version 2.0 – 17/05/2022

Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide guidance on official Department of Education (DoE) use, along with other professional and personal use of social media. The policy outlines specific requirements and advice for learners, staff and administrators on preparing, engaging and responding to social media activity, including establishing and maintaining positive community relationships.

This policy applies to all permanent, part-time, casual, and temporary and contract employees of DoE, across all DoE sites.

1   Principles for the use of social media

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE
Professional	When using social media in a work-related or personal capacity, DoE staff will comply with regulatory and policy expectations.	• Interactions between staff and learners will only have an educationally valid context. • Staff will maintain clear professional boundaries by not friending or following learners. • Staff will differentiate between personal and DoE views, and will not disclose confidential information obtained through their work. • Only DoE accounts/pages will publish information relevant to those sites.
Protective	When using social media in a work-related or personal capacity, DoE staff will ensure the privacy and wellbeing of learners, themselves and other staff.	• The content of DoE accounts will be archived (centrally, or by each site). • Staff will exercise self-protective behaviours by managing their privacy settings so learners cannot see their personal or work-related accounts. • DoE accounts will have processes in place to ensure the privacy of learners and staff. • All DoE accounts need to be approved by site managers and requests sent to DoE's Strategic Marketing, Communications and Media Unit (SMCM). • Each page must have at least two administrators. • As per Meta's (formerly Facebook) policy, all accounts must be tied to a personal account/email to verify their legitimacy and avoid being flagged as spam accounts. DoE does not access your personal Facebook account.
Purposeful	DoE's social media accounts will only be used for learning and DoE business.	• Accounts will only contain content and engage on matters of learning or business purposes. • Accounts that cease to be relevant to the learning and business need will need to be archived. Contact DoE's SMCM Unit for support.

		• Staff who are no longer associated with the learning or business purpose of accounts are to cease being an administrator or member.

2 Policy statement

Social media provides an opportunity to communicate, interact and engage with various audiences. Social media enables users to express themselves, empower others, contribute ideas, make connections, and access information. Through the development and growth of relationships, social media enables users to build cultural values alignment and increase visibility of their activities.

Using social media in schools, Child and Family Learning Centres (CFLCs), libraries and business units can benefit learners, their families, staff and the broader community. It can be a communication tool of critical importance between DoE sites and their communities, particularly when face-to-face communication is not readily possible. For example, in the Coronavirus pandemic, DoE sites used their social media accounts to provide essential site-specific and broader information about the pandemic response.

Using social media in schools, CFLCs, libraries and business units also carries some risk. DoE sites ARE TO use social media applications and technologies with the highest safety, privacy and security standards possible.

DoE supports its employees' professional and responsible participation in social media applications that allow users to create, publish, share, discuss and comment on content. Advice is available to employees through the Social Media Procedures (all staff), Social Media Procedures for Account Administrators (all staff) on the DoE intranet.

DoE also provides a range of other supports for employee and official social media use. These include the Social Media Resource Toolkit and online CANVAS training for social media administrators, as well as the Social Media Administrators Teams area and socialmedia@education.tas.gov.au inbox.

2.1 Learner use

DoE staff MUST NOT ask learners to participate in any social media application if learners do not meet the age requirements of the social media platform, or if parent/carer consent has not been given.

Preventing and responding to cyberbullying on social media is a shared responsibility of all staff, learners, parents and carers. All parties ARE TO contribute to the prevention of cyberbullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships. As a Department we stay up to date with the eSafety Commissioner's website and regularly promote their resources as best practice.

Learning environments MUST support learners impacting in cyberbullying that is affecting their learning and/or wellbeing in that environment. DoE staff ARE TO contribute to the prevention of cyberbullying through curriculum resources designed to prevent and counter cyberbullying.

2.2 Learner wellbeing

All staff, learners, parents and carers ARE TO contribute to the wellbeing of learners by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviours and respectful relationships.

All staff and volunteers MUST comply with all mandatory reporting obligations if they know, believe, or suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is suffering, has suffered, or is likely to suffer, abuse or neglect.

DoE is committed to implementing the recordkeeping recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA).

2.3   Employee use

Personal use of social media may have the potential to conflict with your DoE role as a public servant.

All staff MUST apply the standards for professional use of social media, and it is strongly suggested that all staff apply the standards for personal use of social media by:

- adhering to the relevant State Service Principles and State Service Code of Conduct.

- distinguishing between personal activities and work activities.

- differentiating personal views from DoE's views – if employees identify their workplace on their personal social media accounts, it is recommended that they make clear on their personal profile/s (such as in their 'bio', or 'about' section – depending on the account being used) that the views expressed are their own and not the views of their employer.

- not disclosing confidential information obtained through work.

All staff MUST ensure that professional boundaries are clear and consider carefully the risks and benefits of friending or following parents, carers, guardians, clients or families with whom they have a professional relationship through their own school, library, CFLC or business unit.

- In line with the Professional Standards for Staff Policy, staff who work at schools, libraries or CFLCs MUST NOT 'friend' or 'follow' learners, or allow learners to 'friend' or 'follow' them on their personal social media accounts, unless they are a member of the employee's family and that contact is reasonable.

All staff ARE TO be aware of the requirements under DoE's Conditions of Use Policy for All Users of Information and Communication Technology and the ICT User Agreement – Guidelines for Employees. These Guidelines protect employees and DoE resources by clearly stating what is acceptable use and misuse, and that staff are to act professionally and responsibly when using DoE resources. DoE email, internet and ICT equipment are the property of DoE, which reserves the right to monitor the use of these resources. This right extends to reading the content of files and emails, including content of personal files and emails, stored on DoE ICT resources. This right also extends to monitoring any material that has been run or deleted from any DoE computer or laptop.

DoE is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all staff, which includes practical measures for staff to maintain professional relationships, privacy, safety, and wellbeing. All staff ARE TO exercise self-protective behaviours as detailed in the Social Media Procedures.

Managers MUST be aware of legislated Workplace Health and Safety obligations, and the need to take reasonably practicable measures for staff wellbeing in the management of social media incidents.

2.4   Official DoE use

DoE schools, CFLCs, libraries or business units MAY choose to establish an official DoE social media account for engaging with members of their community. We do not encourage secondary pages, for example sports groups, musicals, etc. The manager / principal / leader MUST make the decision to establish an official social media presence; considering the capacity to manage, monitor, archive and respond to member participation on the account/s; as well as the availability of suitable content for the account/s.

DoE staff who establish, administer and moderate official DoE social media accounts ARE TO:

- use appropriate processes and procedures that mitigate risk.

- use accounts contained within DoE-evaluated technologies/platforms/applications.

- meet archiving responsibilities by ensuring the below step to contact the DoE social media team have been taken.
- Request access support and setup guidance from DoE's SMCM Unit via the intranet form or email socialmedia@education.tas.gov.au as per the Social Media Procedure Manual.

When using social media, the safety and privacy of learners, staff, volunteers and visitors to schools, CFLCs, libraries and business units MUST be maintained. If the required consent to share images, videos or information about another person on social media has not been appropriately given, that content MUST NOT be shared.

Only official DoE social media accounts MAY post information about official DoE activities and events. Individuals who are not administrators of official DoE social media accounts MUST NOT establish and maintain private accounts for the purposes of creating and posting official DoE activities.

Official DoE social media accounts MAY be used to support fundraising causes that are relevant, promote a site's activities as per any other advertising decision, and to gather feedback from members.

Managers / Principals / Leaders

Each official DoE social media account:

- MUST have at least two site-based administrators approved by the site manager or principal. (Only DoE employees ARE TO be administrators.) All administrator requests (including new administrators) must be managed by the SMCM team.
- MAY include the site manager or principal as an administrator, and if they are not an administrator, they MUST develop processes and procedures to ensure they are aware of, and take responsibility for, information that is shared on their site's official social media accounts, including information placed on accounts by community members.
- MUST include a member of the site's leadership/management team as an administrator if an account is public.
- MAY include a member of the site's leadership/management team as an administrator if an account is closed.
- MUST include at least two members of the SMCM Unit.

Account Administrators

> See the Social Media Procedures for Account Administrators for the steps to set up and administer official accounts. The Social Media Resource Toolkit also provides relevant instructional resources.

In setting up an official DoE social media account, administrators MUST:

- advise the SMCM Unit of your request to establish a page via the intranet form or email socialmedia@education.tas.gov.au. This allows the SMCM Unit to establish best practice record management that meets legislative requirements, as well as offer ongoing support for your account as per the Social Media Procedure.
- be a DoE staff member working directly for that DoE site and have written permission from the person in charge of that site to establish and manage an official DoE social media account.
- complete the DoE Canvas Social Media Administrator Training prior to being given admin permissions.

- have a genuine individual social media profile to manage the account – this is a requirement of all social media platforms, in particular Meta.
- mutually agree upon the practices and approaches to the account with the other administrators for the account – there is no expectation that administrators, or any other DoE staff, will monitor official DoE social media accounts outside of business hours (except for monitoring of whole-of-DoE accounts by SMCM).

While administering an official DoE social media account, administrators MUST:

- only post content that is in line with DoE policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- comply with copyright legal requirements and be familiar with the appropriate legislative requirements in relation to accessibility and mandatory reporting.
- apply the outlined practices to establish and maintain positive member relationships, including setting up processes and notifications to manage their community's expectation and reduce risk.
- be aware of, and adhere to, any current directives from DoE regarding social media, for example closed comment directives.
- in an emergency, follow steps for social media updates in the Security and Emergency Management procedures. In consultation with the site manager, administrators ARE TO contact SMCM or the Libraries Tasmania communications unit for social media support and coordination.

Member relationships

To establish and support respectful and responsible relationships with communities, site managers / principals / leaders MUST put in place practices to establish and maintain positive relationships.

It is not possible to control what others say about us on their own personal social media accounts. When comments are made or posts are shared that negatively impact on DoE schools, libraries, CFLCs or business units, but they are not made on official DoE social media accounts, it MAY be appropriate for administrators or site managers to reach out to the person making the comments and to discuss the issue constructively, and/or report inappropriate comments or posts.

Practices to maintain positive relationships:

- all official DoE social media accounts MUST include the expectations of conduct and rules of engagement for members in the 'about' or 'description' section of the account. The DoE recommend linking to its overarching behaviours statement.
- the process to resolve any social media incident IS TO aim to restore relationships in a way that promotes the safety, wellbeing, privacy and procedural fairness for everyone involved.
- official DoE social media accounts MUST NOT be established or encouraged as a place for members of a site's community, or the general public, to undertake a grievance process.

2.5   Groups and Closed Groups

DoE does not endorse or provide support services for the use of private or closed groups. If you chose to use these platforms, they need to be run and managed outside of the official DoE account. These pages will not be managed, supported, or archived by DoE.

2.6 School Association use

Principals or other designated members of staff ARE encouraged to review the content of their School Association's social media accounts. Involvement might not necessarily be in an administrator's role, but they should be aware of the content and conversations happening to monitor potential or emerging issues.

Only official DoE social media accounts MAY use official DoE logos to identify themselves. No other individual, group or organisation, including School Associations, may use official DoE logos for the purposes of social media profile pictures, cover photos, or any other branding purpose.

3 Support, information and tools

You must notify the SMCM Unit when you need to setup an official social media page via the intranet form or email socialmedia@education.tas.gov.au. In doing this, SMCM can provide ongoing support and advice related to social media accounts, maintain a central social media register, and record and archive selected DoE social media accounts. All administrators must complete the mandatory Canvas online Social Media Administrators Training.

SMCM monitors corporate DoE social media accounts (the whole-of-DoE Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts), including monitoring outside of usual business hours.

Further resources are available in the Social Media Resource Toolkit on the DoE intranet.

Other supporting information/tools:

- DoE Values
- Legal Issues Handbook
- Making Public Comment Infosheet
- Occupational Violence and Aggression
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour
- Student Wellbeing Hub

4 Related policies

- Conditions of Use Policy for all Users of Information and Communications Technology
- Conduct and Behaviour Standards
- Professional Standards for Staff – Policy
- Protective Practices for Staff in their interactions with students
- Respectful School Volunteer and Visitor Behaviour Policy and Process – Template
- Respectful Student Behaviour Policy
- Use of Mobile Phones by Students at School Policy

5 Related procedures

- Social Media Procedures

- Social Media Procedures for Account Administrators
- ICT User Agreement – Guidelines for Employees
- Professional Standards for Staff – Guidelines
- Protective Practices for Staff in their interactions with students – Guidelines
- Respectful School Visitor and Volunteer Behaviour Procedure
- Security and Emergency Management Procedures

6 Legislation

- Archives Act 1983
- Copyright Act 1969
- Education Act 2016
- State Service Act 2000
- State Service Code of Conduct
- State Service Principles

7 Definitions

Administrator

Any DoE staff member who is responsible for contributing to, updating, monitoring, filtering and responding to the social media presence of a DoE site on official DoE social media accounts.

Friend or Follower

A 'friend' or 'follower' is someone (personal, organisational or conceptual) that is added to a social media account. A 'friend' or 'follower' may or may not be someone with whom you have met or interacted in person, and may be able to view your social media account information depending on your privacy settings.

Learner

A person who is participating in learning programs in DoE environments.

Member

Any person (DoE staff, learners, School Association members, parents/carers, Library and CFLC clients, volunteers, DoE contractors and consultants, and the broader community) who has joined official DoE social media accounts.

Official DoE Social Media Accounts/Pages

Any DoE approved public social media account established by SMCM and managed by DoE staff, that is created for the purposes of publishing, sharing or communicating information, or for enabling interaction related specifically to DoE activities, including learners and their work.

Responsibilities

The meaning of MUST, IS/ARE TO and MAY:

• 'must' is to be understood as being mandatory

• 'is to' and 'are to' are to be understood as being directory

• 'may' is to be understood as being discretionary or enabling, as the context requires.

Site

A DoE operated location or place of work, including schools, CFLCs, libraries, business units and other workplaces.

Social Media

Any electronic or online service, mobile application and virtual community that has the following features:

- Has the sole or primary purpose of enabling social interaction between two or more end users

- Allows end users to link to or interact with other end users, and

- Allows end users to post material on the service.

Types of social media applications include message boards, social networking sites, blogs and microblogs, image, video and music sharing sites and mobile applications. Specific examples of social media applications include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Class Dojo.