



## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to encourage appropriate use of social media and to provide clarity to staff members, students, parents, volunteers and contractors on how to conduct themselves and of their responsibility as representatives of Geelong Lutheran College when using social media.

It provides guidance about acceptable use of social media for:

- (a) staff members, volunteers and contractors acting in a professional capacity; and
- (b) other people acting in a personal capacity.

## **Policy Statement**

Online communication and social media tools are important channels that enable Geelong Lutheran College to engage with parents, students, staff members, volunteers, contractors, and other community members about its activities. We also understand that people utilise social media in their personal lives. The College is therefore committed to establishing a culture of openness, respect, trust and integrity in our online activities.

## **Scope**

This Policy applies to all key stakeholders:

Staff members; Students; College Council members, Volunteers; Parents; and Contractors.

## **General**

### **1 Definitions**

- 1.1 **Geelong Lutheran College** refers to both campuses and may be referred to as GLC or the College.
- 1.2 **Contractors** means all persons engaged by GLC for services on a contract basis.
- 1.3 **Digital communications** means any communication with an audience using a digital medium that has the potential to be viewed by or shared with a wider audience. Examples are SMS, radio and television broadcasting.
- 1.4 **Parents** means the person/s legally responsible for the care, welfare and development of the student including, but is/are not limited to, a parent or guardian or caregiver or foster parent.
- 1.5 **Social media** means content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. Social media is distinct from traditional media such as newspapers, television, and film. Social media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone (even private individuals) to publish or access information – other media generally require significant resources to publish information. Social media may include (although is not limited to):
  - (a) social networking (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer, Snapchat);
  - (b) video and photo sharing apps (e.g. Instagram, YouTube, Vine, Pinterest);
  - (c) blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs, Tumblr;
  - (d) blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. comments or your say feature);
  - (e) micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter);
  - (f) wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia);
  - (g) forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool, What's App);
  - (h) vod and podcasting;
  - (i) online multiplayer gaming platforms;



- (j) instant messaging (including SMS, WhatsApp, Viber);
- (k) geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare, Yelp).

1.6 **Staff** means all persons employed by GLC including full-time, part-time and casual staff members.

1.7 **Students** means all persons enrolled at GLC under an enrolment agreement.

1.8 **Volunteer** means all persons that are engaged by GLC for services on a voluntary basis.

## 2. Relevant policies and procedures

2.1 The behaviour of key stakeholders online must be consistent with other GLC policies and procedures, including:

- (a) Privacy Policy, Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and any other internet use related policies.

## 3. Guiding principles

- (a) All online behaviour should at all times be consistent with and demonstrate GLC's ethos, core values and respect for one another.
- (b) Students must agree to abide by the GLC Digital Citizen Agreement. The College works in partnership with parents to educate students in regard to these matters.
- (c) Key stakeholders should be aware of mixing school and personal lives. It is expected that you will represent GLC well.
- (d) By identifying yourself as an affiliate of GLC in your online profile, you create an association between what you say online and the College itself.
- (e) Key stakeholders must consider that what they say will be on the web permanently.
- (f) Key stakeholders must take care with the language used online so that any messages sent do not offend or hurt the recipient, or anyone else who reads it. Ask 'would I say this to the person if we were face to face?'

- a. If uncertain about something, don't publish it!
- b. Information will be around for a long time, so make sure content is correct before posting and seek advice if in doubt.
- c. Key stakeholders are asked to be respectful, play fair, be considerate and to use discretion and take care not to publish information that should not be made public.

## 4. Professional use of social media

4.1 All key stakeholders of GLC are encouraged to:

- (a) have a professional online presence to connect with colleagues, professional contacts and GLC via social media sites; and
- (b) use social media to promote GLC and professional success, engage in business development and share information and ideas.

4.2 As a representative of GLC, key stakeholders must take reasonable care to ensure any action or comment which may be published and communicated via social media or digital communication does not harm the reputation of themselves, colleagues, students, parents or the College.

4.3 Key stakeholders must not connect, join, or follow students via social media and digital communications.

4.4 When communicating, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors are required to:



- (a) be respectful of all individuals and communities with whom they interact online;
- (b) be polite and respectful of other opinions, even in times of heated discussion and debate;
- (c) adhere to the terms of use of the website/platform and GLC's policies and procedures; and
- (d) respect copyright, privacy, financial disclosure and other applicable laws when publishing on social media platforms.

## **5. Personal use of social media**

5.1 This Policy does not intend to discourage or unduly limit personal expression or online activities.

5.2 However, it should be recognised that there is the potential for damage to be caused, directly or indirectly, to GLC and others as a result of personal use of social media when you can be identified as a key stakeholder of the College.

5.3 You must respect a person's professional and personal environment and must not harass other people online.

5.4 Where your comments or profile can identify you as a Student, Parent, Staff member, Contractor or Volunteer of GLC (for example: LinkedIn or Facebook profiles):

- (a) you must:
  - (i) only disclose and discuss publicly available information;
  - (ii) ensure all content published is accurate and not misleading, and complies with all relevant policies of the College;
  - (iii) be polite and respectful to all people with whom you interact; and
  - (iv) adhere to the terms of use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws and departmental policies.
- (b) you must not:
  - (i) post material that is or might be construed as offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;
  - (ii) imply that you are authorised to speak as a representative of GLC (when you are not given this express authorisation), nor give the impression that the views you express are those of the College;
  - (iii) use your College email address or any College logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of your personal comment;
  - (iv) use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in your capacity as a Staff member, Contractor or Volunteer of the College;
  - (v) make any comment or post any material that might otherwise damage the College's reputation.

5.5 In regard to mobile phone / device usage at College:

- (a) Students may only use social media platforms while at school where it relates to their education at the College or has an educative purpose, under the direction of their teacher. (The rules of student use of their mobile phone at school are outlined in the Student Diary.)



## **6. Privacy & confidentiality**

6.1 Staff members, Contractors and Volunteers must not:

- (a) disclose confidential information obtained in the course of their engagement with GLC via social media or digital communications; and
- (b) use or disclose personal information in breach of Geelong Lutheran College's obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

6.2 You may only share images or any other information relating to another person not readily available to the general public, with consent.

## **7. Your security**

7.1 All Staff members, Contractors and Volunteers must ensure the security of their social media profiles, and regularly monitor their profiles so that if there is a security breach it can be dealt with quickly.

7.2 We encourage our Staff members, Contractors and Volunteers to:

- (a) be aware of profile security and permissions with whatever social media they are using and where available use controls to sensibly restrict access to information; and
- (b) use a secure system when accessing social media systems outside of the workplace.

7.3 All Staff members, Contractors and Volunteers must notify the Principal in the event of a breach of security, if they have concerns that they are not acting in accordance with this Policy, or if they are unsure of the requirements.

## **8. Intellectual property**

8.1 You must not plagiarise material via social media and digital communication and you must respect the principles of intellectual property, fair use and copyright laws.

## **9. Bullying and equal opportunity**

9.1 We promote equal opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination, bullying and harassment.

9.2 You must not post material that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, derogatory, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity.

9.3 Publishing comments, images or other information that is, or could be construed as, discriminatory, bullying, harassing or slanderous is not acceptable, regardless of the communication channel that such comments occur in.

## **10. Grievance reporting process**

10.1 If you believe that someone has inappropriately commented about the College, a student, a staff member, a contractor or a volunteer of the College, you should print or take a screen shot of the page and immediately report the occurrence to the Principal.



10.2 If a Staff member, Contractor or Volunteer feels that an individual is using social media such that it is negatively affecting productivity or the work environment, they should report the occurrence to the Principal as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### **11. Breaches of this Policy**

11.1 You will be held accountable for acting in breach of this Policy and may face disciplinary action. The form of disciplinary action will vary depending on the nature of GLC's engagement with you however may constitute a breach of employment or enrolment obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination or some other contravention of the law.

11.2 If a person acts in breach of the law they may be personally liable.

11.3 All people covered by the policy are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any social media or digital communications platform. When in doubt, seek guidance from the Principal about how to comply with the aforementioned obligations.

#### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's five-year review cycle.

May 2021