

Social Media Policy (Parents & Carers)

Rationale

Social media in some form is now used by the majority of the community as a way to interact and communicate easily in a timely manner. The use of social media platforms such as 'Facebook' and 'Instagram' can be a highly effective means of communication between large groups of people. Parents and carers within the Ormond Primary School (OPS) community are also wanting to use social media as way to keep connected.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that social media is used:

- To create a sense of inclusiveness within our community;
- To build and maintain the good reputation and spirit of the school, leadership, teachers, support staff, parents, students, the Ormond community, service providers and contractors;
- To allow the Ormond community to easily keep up to date with activities and events and to share ideas and resources; and
- To ensure that effective communication and engagement between all school community members can take place.

Scope

This policy relates only to social media created by parents, carers and staff regarding OPS. The scope of the policy includes the use of social media mediums such as Facebook Groups and WhatsApp Groups set up by OPS's Parents and Friends on behalf of the wider parent community. It does not cover social media use for students.

For the purpose of this document, social media is defined as a collection of digital communication channels dedicated to community-based input, content sharing and collaboration, including but not limited to:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- Weibo and Wechat
- LinkedIn
- Reddit
- Blogs

Context

Current communication media and forums include:

- COMPASS – is the official communication portal used by the school. It is used by staff to disseminate information and notifications in a timely manner to parents and carers. It is also used to collect payments, and to receive approvals for camps, excursions and policies.
- OPS Newsletter – a fortnightly online publication used by parents and carers to hear regular updates from the School Principal, plus information regarding the calendar, relevant school notices, events and news.

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- School Assembly – held on a weekly basis onsite at school. It features announcements by student leaders and staff.
- OPS Website – used by school staff to communicate to existing parents/carers, prospective parents/carers and the wider Ormond community information about the school, its curriculum, its events, and its policies and procedures.
- ‘OPS Parents and Friends Community Kindess’ Facebook Group – was a ‘private’ Facebook Group set up by OPS Parents and Friends in 2020 to provide parents/carers with a forum to share information and resources that relate to student life at OPS. Note: This Facebook Group will be superceded by a new official school Facebook ‘public’ page ‘Ormond Primary School’, plus an official Instagram page ‘ormondprimarieschool’.
- ‘Year Level’ Specific Facebook and WhatsApp Groups – Year Level specific ‘private’ Groups enable parents/carers to ask questions to other parents and to disseminate information that relates to student life within that Year Level.

This Social Media Policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s Communication Policy.

Policy

Background

- A Social Media Code of Conduct is listed in Appendix 1 which details procedures and protocols around the use of social media relating to OPS.
- Specific ‘User Guidelines for OPS’ Year Level Specific ‘Private’ Groups are listed in Appendix 2.
- The Social Media Policy is developed by the School Council through knowledge of:
 - Current best practices in schools
 - Legislative requirements under the Commonwealth of Australia Telecommunications Act
 - Victoria Department of Education social media policies
 - OPS’ eSmart Policy
- Community support and input is sought in developing and implementing an effective social media strategy.
- We wish to highlight that community conduct on social media and school related social media pages and Groups serves as a role model for students in their use of social media.

Underage Social Media Users

- Parental supervision is required when children view the school’s Facebook Groups. Please note that social media policies from companies such as Facebook stipulate that children below 13 years of age are not eligible to have a Facebook account.

Friending Teachers on Social Media

- Teachers operate under a code of conduct which requires them to maintain a professional relationship with students and parents and refrain from social interaction.
- Do not seek to ‘friend’ a teacher, educational support staff or school leader on social media.

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Privacy

- Parents and carers must refrain from posting videos, photos or comments that include other children who attend the school unless explicit permission from the children's parent/carer has been given.
- Parents and carers who attend OPS must have the right to 'opt out' of having images (still or video) or sound recordings of their children posted to the school's social media.
- To ensure the privacy and safety of children attending the school, no surnames of children attending OPS should be posted on school related social media.

Monitoring

- OPS and OPS Parents and Friends reserves the right to monitor and remove posts that feature bullying and inappropriate language or content.
- Posts and comments should not incite or fuel overly negative comments. Any personal grievances with OPS staff or with the school should be taken up directly with the school's administration rather than posted on the school's social media.

Removal

- OPS and OPS Parents and Friends reserves the right to ban any user from interacting with its social media pages including its Facebook Pages and Groups, its WhatsApp Groups and its Instagram pages for breaches of the Social Media policy.

Review and Approval:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle and can be modified should the need arise prior to the four-year review.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct exists for parents and carers in relation to using both the school's and Parents and Friends' social media groups:

a) Be kind and courteous

We're all in this together to create a welcoming environment. Let's treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness is required. We're all here to support each other in the school community. However, if you have grievances relating to Ormond Primary School or its staff, please raise them directly with school staff rather than posting them on the school's or Parents and Friends' social media sites.

b) No hate speech or bullying

Make sure everyone feels safe. Bullying of any kind isn't allowed, and discrimination, harassment, defamation or degrading comments will not be tolerated.

c) No spam or self-promotion

Self-promotion, spam and irrelevant links aren't allowed.

d) Respect everyone's privacy

For privacy reasons, if you wish to add members to the school's or Parents and Friends' social media groups, please ensure that you have their permission before you add them. Please treat as confidential any private and personal information obtained in the school's or Parents and Friends' social media groups.

Appendix 2: User Guidelines for OPS' Year Level Specific 'Private' Groups

Year Level specific social media 'private' Groups can be used as a quick means of communication between parents/carers of children within the same Year Level. Please note: all official Ormond Primary School related information will still be distributed via COMPASS, and not by these Facebook Groups.

- Parent/carers wishing to create a new Year Level Facebook or WhatsApp group must seek the approval of the OPS Parents and Friends Committee (p.and.f.ormond@gmail.com).
- The parent seeking approval to start the Year Level Facebook or WhatsApp Group must accept responsibility for running the Group as the Group's Administrator. This includes agreeing to monitoring the posts within the Group.
- An OPS Parents and Friends Committee member will assist with the creation and correct set up of each new Year Level social media Group when a new Foundation Year Level commences.
- Parents/carers of children attending OPS can request access to the relevant Year Level Group by searching for the Group name. Once given access, members can access and view all content, add posts, comment on posts and "like" individual posts. Alternatively, parents can give their permission to be added to the Group directly by the Administrator.
- A second parent Administrator is to be nominated to ensure security and content of the page is maintained at all times.
- Year Level Facebook and WhatsApp Groups must be 'private' (only members can see who's in the Group and what they post). The Group name must be visible to all users who search for the name – however, content cannot be viewed until a person is accepted as a Group member.
- Groups set up from December 2020 onwards must use a Group name that uses the following format – OPS, Year Level, Year. For example 'OPS Year Two 2020'. Group names can be updated by the Administrator at the start of each year to reflect the new Year Level. For example, 'OPS Year Two 2020' would change to 'OPS Year Three 2021' and so forth.
- Only the Group's Administrators can accept requests to join the group.
- Users may create posts and add content.
- A school staff member may occasionally be invited to join the Group by the Group's Administrator or by the Parents and Friends Committee.
- Users of this group must follow the Code of Conduct outlined in Appendix 1 of this policy document.
- The Group's Administrators maintain the right to delete inappropriate posts.
- User rights and security settings will be reviewed over time.