

Mount Ridley P12 College

SOCIAL MEDIA



Help for non-English speakers

If you require assistance with understanding this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the College and someone will organise a multicultural aide or the relevant person to assist you.

SCOPE

The Social Media Policy will guide the use of Social Media as a form of advertising, communication and potential teaching tool within a controlled classroom at Mount Ridley P-12 College.

Teachers, students and parents are increasingly using digital technologies for professional purposes (i.e. teaching and learning) and personal purposes (i.e. communicating, creating and socialising) thus challenging the traditional concept of learning in a school setting.

With the implementation of the *Bring Your Own Device* program (BYOD) at Mount Ridley P-12 College; the increasing use of Social Media as a communication and advertising tool in general; students use of mobile phones; the increase use of Web 2.0 tools as teaching and learning tools as well as the experimentation of Social Media as an academic research tool; it has been found necessary to ensure Mount Ridley P-12 College protect the college reputation and implement a policy that is user friendly and effective in its intent.

This policy is to be followed in conjunction with the:

- Student ICT Code of Conduct;
- School Privacy Policy;
- Bullying Prevention Policy;
- Acceptable Use Agreement; and the
- Digital Learning Policy.
- Social Media Use to Support Student Learning Policy
- School Communications Toolkit

Mount Ridley P-12 College understands that digital technologies including the internet, apps, computers and tablets provide students with rich opportunities to support learning and development in a range of ways.

Access to the sites should be free, equitable and accessible and should not put the student in a position of disadvantage or risk with respect to public or corporate access to their personal information, other content or hinder their opportunity to complete work as required.

PURPOSE

Social media and social networking applications are 'Web 2.0' tools and platforms that enable "user-generated content" through writing and uploading to an online source. Examples of social media platforms that can be used for learning and teaching include: discussion forums, blogs, wikis, and virtual worlds. Examples of external social media sites include TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Wikipedia, Flickr, Twitter, LinkedIn and Second Life.

Social Media is a moving target: technology changes rapidly, and standard policies may quickly become obsolete. Social media tools are fluid, dynamic, and don't fit easily into sets of rigid policies and legalese. These features (which make them appealing, interactive and useful as teaching and learning tools) create challenges in terms of navigating the boundary between the professional and the personal.

Social media tools can be open and public, which means individuals from outside the classroom may be interacting and collaborating with students inside the classroom. As such, it is extremely important that teaching staff pay attention to the potential issues around student privacy and consent, and it is essential that students also abide by the codes of conduct at Mount Ridley P-12 College. Mount Ridley P-12 College is committed to promoting a safe, responsible and discerning use of digital technologies, and educating students on appropriate responses to any dangers or threats to wellbeing that they may encounter when using the internet and digital technologies and solutions.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, **digital technologies** are defined as being any networks, systems, software or hardware including electronic devices and applications which allow a user to access, receive, view, record, store, communicate, copy or send any information such as text, images, audio, or video.

Social Media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

POLICY

Whole school focus

As a whole, it is necessary that the teacher or facilitator encompass the following when implementing social media into the classroom.

- 1) **Consent:** If social media tools are to be used in a classroom setting (whether or not it is part of the formal assessment), this must be explicitly stated in the course outline. For underage students written legal consent is required from their guardians. Most social media sites have age restrictions; these also apply to a classroom setting.
- 2) **Expectations** need to be transparent: in what is required by the students as participators and what the teacher intends to achieve.
- 3) **Opt-out option:** If the course is required for a student to complete their academic program, and the student has personal/ethical (or other) reasons for not wanting to use

off-site social media sites or tools, instructors should be prepared to offer those students an alternative. Offering alternatives might not be feasible when the use of social media tools is unavoidable in the context of specific learning outcomes for a course, but again, this must be explicitly stated in the course outline. If the course is not required, and if the use of social media tools is explicit in the course outline, students may elect not to take the course.

- 4) **Etiquette:** Before the social media tools are used, the instructor needs to have a discussion with students about proper etiquette when using social media in the classroom. Everyone needs to be reminded of the acceptable use policy & codes of conduct.
- 5) **Permissions:** Instructors and students need to be aware of the '**terms of use**' for different social media tools. There are important issues to pay attention to regarding **copyright infringement:** posting content without proper attribution and permissions can result in legal action being taken.
- 6) **Personal accounts:** Department of Education (DE) recommends that employees in schools do not share content from personal social media accounts with students. Any social media account that is created must be of a professional nature, where only content relating to the topic is to be discussed and explored.
- 7) **Privacy:** Students should be encouraged to set up **alias** accounts for the course so their real names are not associated with the course, in the public domain. This helps to navigate the professional-personal boundary, and it is a key means by which student privacy is maintained. This is particularly important if the content is of a personal nature. The instructor will, of course, be able to associate students with the alias accounts, but this information must be kept confidential. Depending on the content, or the type of course, there may be situations where a student's name is used publicly as part of the course, but this needs to be done carefully and cautiously.
- 8) **Reputation:** In no circumstances should anyone's personal or collegial reputation be put at risk through the use of social media in the classroom operated under or associated with the school name in any form. This includes:
 - Images/video/documentation taken without someone's consent.
 - The use of someone's name without his or her consent.
 - Inappropriate images/video/context of the school grounds, staff, students and community associated with the school.
 - The negative commenting of the staff, students and community associated with the school.

Staff focus

The use of social media from a staff perspective is applied in two forms:

a) The personal use of social media

- All staff members are entitled to their own private social media accounts.
- The management, activities and discussions within those private accounts are the sole responsibility of those members.
- Under any circumstances there is to be no use of the college logo, slogan, images, audio and video recordings, and comments of either a positive or negative manner that can be linked back to the college, the college community and its reputation.

b) The professional/curriculum driven use of social media.

- Before engaging in social media, as a representative of the department and the college, you must collate your content as evidence for your intent, timeframes and persons who will be involved.
- It is critical to obtain consent from a respective Principal and assign a separate current member of the college to monitor and assess your online content.
- Disclose that you are an employee or a representative of the department, and use only your own identity, or an approved official account or avatar.
- If the purpose is research based, consent forms are required to be obtained and approved by the DE Conduct and Ethics Branch.
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant departmental and Whole of Victorian Government policies.
- You should respect copyright laws and fair use of copyrighted material and attribute work to the original author/source wherever possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our College's website;
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff;
- Included in our staff handbook/manual/USB;
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings;
- Discussed at student forums;
- Reminders in our school newsletter; and
- Made available from College administration upon request.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy created	2016
Last Updated	2024
Approved by	College Council
Next scheduled review date	2027