

APPLICABLE TO	All users of the CSO's and diocesan schools' social media platforms
DOCUMENT OWNER	Director of Schools
APPROVAL DATE	23 September 2016
APPROVED BY	CSO Leadership Team
SCHOOL ACTIONS	System Policy – Schools are to ensure their practices are consistent with this policy. A local policy is not required.
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	New document
NEXT REVIEW DATE	May 2017
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy Privacy Policy

## Purpose

This policy articulates the appropriate use by the community and public of the Catholic Schools Office's (CSO) social media platforms. It applies to all posts and content on any of the CSO's and schools' numerous social media pages.

This policy is subject to ongoing change due to the ever-changing nature of technology and online communications.

## Policy Statement

This policy relates to the CSO's and its schools' social media sites as well as any future channels. The CSO encourages its audience to participate in conversation on social media; the expectation is that this will be done in a respectful manner. The CSO respects the confidentiality of its staff and students and views the welfare of CSO teachers and students as a priority. The CSO will assert its rights to uphold this in any social media dealings. The CSO and its schools do not agree with, or endorse, every comment that individuals post on its pages.

## Definitions

### Social media

For the purpose of this policy, social media is defined as 'any conversation or activity that occurs online, where people can share information or data that might impact on the CSO and its schools'.

## Scope

This policy applies to all users of the CSO's and diocesan schools' social media pages, including but not limited to staff, current students, parents, future students and prospective students.

## Guiding Principles

### MODERATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES AND STAYING SAFE ONLINE

The goal of these pages is to share the good news stories of the CSO, its schools, and the diocese in which it is a part, and to share ideas and information with the community. The CSO reserves the right

and responsibility to moderate posts on their social media pages to ensure the safety of its staff, students, community and any affiliates of the CSO.

### **Deleting posts and pages**

The CSO believes that all social media channels should be considered a form of two-way communication and a vehicle to listen to the community its views. However, the CSO and its schools will delete a comment on its pages if it contains:

- Hate speech
- Profanity, obscenity or vulgarity
- Nudity in profile pictures
- Defamation to a person or people
- Name calling and/or personal attacks
- Identifies a staff member, student or anyone affiliated with the CSO by name in a negative or defamatory way
- Reveals confidential information
- Comments whose main purpose are to sell a product
- Comments that infringe on copyrights
- Spam comments, such as the same comment posted repeatedly on a profile

It is the responsibility of the CSO to protect the confidentiality of its staff and students. In cases where this confidentiality has been breached, the CSO has the authority to deactivate any CSO or school social media pages to address concerns in a private forum.

### **Blocking**

The CSO is permitted to set the strength level of the Facebook profanity filter and to add additional words as required. The CSO is also permitted to add any name to any CSO Facebook block list. Repeated violations of this Policy may cause an author to be blocked from CSO social media profiles.

### **Raising issues**

The CSO encourages each CSO school community to share positive news or upcoming events using the Catholic Schools and individual school social media pages. However, the CSO also reminds all users of these social media sites that some situations are best dealt with privately. The issues raised in this public environment should be limited to school improvements, generally those related to infrastructure or processes.

Issues involving personal relationships with students or staff, or grievances against the school or CSO, must not be raised on social media sites. The CSO does not support negative posts, or permit the names of our staff, students or any other community members to be included in issue-based posts. In the case of any complaints or grievances, the protocol outlined in the CSO's Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy must be followed at all times.

### **Using names in posts**

The names of others can be used in posts only when an individual wishes to acknowledge someone's positive work or community contribution. The intention of CSO's social media pages are to build the school's community spirit and thus provides a supportive online environment to users.

### **Interacting with CSO social media pages**

Users are allowed to 'like' and comment on the posts and on comments by other users. All links posted as comments on CSO or school page posts will be reviewed and may be deleted depending on the link's nature.

Users are not allowed to:

- Upload media such as photos or videos
- Publish personal or sensitive information relating to themselves or others (such as birthday, home address, phone number, bank details, etc.) in posts or comments
- Publish images, videos, audio clips of anyone under the age of 18 without explicit permission

Following Facebook's terms and conditions, the CSO does not endorse the creation of a Facebook account by children under 13 years of age, and will assume all users engaging with CSO and school social media pages are 13 or older.

## GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- By using or accessing CSO social media pages, the CSO understands that individuals are familiar with, and agree to comply with, each channel's own Terms and Conditions (where relevant).
- As this is a public forum and participation is voluntary, by posting on any of the CSO's social media channels, users grant the CSO and its affiliates the right to use any posted content in any way and in any media without any legal or monetary obligation to the author.
- Users can 'unlike'/'unfollow' the CSO at any time if they no longer want to connect with any of the CSO's social media channels.

## THE LAW AND STATEMENT OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The CSO's social media pages operate under the *Commonwealth Telecommunications Act* and Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. This policy document is secondary to the NSW Government's policy on social media, which should be followed at all times. This social media policy is available on the NSW Government's Education website.

## Responsibilities

### CSO Communications Team

The CSO Communications Team are the permitted administrators of both the Catholic Schools of Maitland-Newcastle social media pages and individual school social media pages. These permissions can be extended to members of the Diocesan Communications Team and Director of Schools if necessary. If individuals have any queries about this document, please contact the CSO Communications Manager by emailing [comms@mn.catholic.edu.au](mailto:comms@mn.catholic.edu.au).

## Budget

This policy will be reviewed periodically to take into account any changed technology, legislation, expectations or practices. An allocation to cover the costs associated with the implementation of this policy is made annually by the CSO.

## Legislative/Professional Guidelines

*Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cth)

Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities

NSW Government Education Social Media Policy