

**SECTION 3.1.2: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY** 

**The Australian Ballet School** 

**RESPONSIBLE:** Development Committee (DC)

THIS VERSION APPROVED BY THE BOARD: June 2021

**LATEST VERSION:** March 2023

**REVIEW DATE:** March 2025 (review every 2-years unless otherwise required)

POLICY ACCESS LOCATION: Staff Portal, Student Portal and The Australian ballet School

website

### 1. OVERVIEW

**Social Media** represents a growing form of communication within The Australian Ballet School, (**School**) enabling more accessible engagement with members of the **School Community**, its corporate partners and the wider public.

**Social Media** is an increasingly important part of many people's lives, both at home and at work. However, it is also an area in which rules and boundaries are constantly being tested; posting and sharing information on social media can have unintended, often lasting consequences.

Material posted online effectively lasts forever; it may be replicated endlessly through sharing and reposting and sent to recipients who may view it out of context or who you never expected or wanted to see it. Users of **Social Media** must understand the speed and reach of content posted means comments posted online are immediately available to a wide audience – with **Social Media** nothing is private or can be deleted.

A site's security settings are not a guarantee of privacy, material posted in a relatively secure setting can still be copied and reproduced elsewhere;

**Social Media** is diverse and continues to expand and develop. Social media sites can take many forms, including but not limited to, blogs, microblogs (Twitter), photo and video sharing apps (Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube), social networking (Facebook, Yubo), podcasts, forum/discussion groups (Whirlpool, Reddit), Google groups, wiki (Wikipedia), instant messaging (SMS), online gaming platforms or content communities.

# 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the School to maximise its **Social Media** reach while protecting its reputation. It is important to understand how to protect the interests of the School when using **Social Media**. At the same time there is a responsibility on all users of **Social** 

**Media** within the School Community to use common sense and courtesy, being mindful of security, child safety, privacy, respect and discretion when engaging with others on Social Media platforms.

To support and further develop the School's communications channels with families of full-time students, the School's Family Support Programme (FSP) uses the School's **Social Media** platforms to provide additional resource information and activities, this includes target initiatives for the graduate level and management of a 'parent page' on the School's Facebook site.

Related Policies: This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct (1.2), Marketing and Communications Policy (3.1), Records and Archives Management Policy (4.1.1) (pending), Intellectual Property and Copyright Policy (4.2), Appropriate Use of Technology Policy (4.3), ICT and Cyber Security Policy (4.3.3), Duty of Care (6.1) and Child Safe Standards (6.4). Students and parents/carers are also directed to the 'Social Media' section in the School's *Handbook for Students and Parents*.

#### WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

The policy applies to all members of the School Community.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Follow:** on **Social Media** represents a user who chooses to see all of another user's posts on their contact feed and may enable the user to comment on another user's posts.

**Information Communication Technologies (ICT):** refers to a diverse group of technologies that provide access to information primarily through telecommunications technologies. This includes, but is not limited to, the internet, wireless networks, mobile phones, email, USB memory sticks, printers, scanners, camera, digital television, streaming material, robots, and any device that stores, retrieves/manages, transmits or receives information electronically or any other digital form.

Social Media: includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- social news provides news topics and then the ability to vote and/or comment on articles;
- social sharing allows users to create, upload and share videos or photos with others, for example, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat and TikTok;
- social networks sites that allow users to find and link/connect to other people, for example Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+;
- social bookmarking provides users the ability to find and bookmark sites and information of interest; and
- any other platform through which information, ideas, messages, images or other content can be communicated, shared or viewed.

## 4. POLICY

This policy sets out the requirements and guidelines for acceptable and responsible use of Social Media.

Members of the School Community must abide by this policy when using Social Media, irrespective of whether it is:

- Outside working hours;
- When posting, acting in an official or unofficial capacity;
- When posting material anonymously or using an alias or pseudonym.

The Head of Marketing and Communications and the Marketing & Communications Coordinator are the only Staff Members authorized to respond on behalf of the School to queries or activity (e.g., reply posts, comments) on Social Media.

Members of the School Community must not post as a representative of the School on Social Media, unless the Marketing and Communications team has given prior written approval to the content.

# 4.1 Staff Members using Social Media at work:

It is appropriate for Staff Members to share ideas and information at work through internal Social Media platforms.

When engaging in group platforms or exercises, consideration of others and their opinions is required. Certain behaviours can adversely affect the job performance /learning experience of the individual or others using these sites. While healthy debate is encouraged in places where the sharing of information and ideas is relevant, it must also be a welcoming experience for everyone. Behaviours online, such as bullying, harassment, discrimination or disregard for the Confidentiality of others or the School in general can have a negative effect on individuals and the overall work/learning environment. The School has zero tolerance for such conduct and expects the values in the Code of Conduct (1.2) to be upheld.

While at work, any personal use of the ICT facilities of the School must be kept to a minimum and must not impede and affect a Staff Member's work performance.

Staff Members must not Follow, 'friend' or otherwise connect with current students or any former students who are under 18 years of age, in the first six months following graduation or their earlier departure from the School. Staff Members who depart the School must not, for a period of six months, 'friend' or otherwise connect with students or former students.

# 4.2 Other members of the School Community using Social Media in their role at the School

Whenever members of the School Community use Social Media in their role at the School or when using the School's ICT facilities, they must observe the following:

- Be polite and respectful to the opinions of others at all times;
- Be mindful that posts may be read by people from a variety of backgrounds who may not share the same sense of humour or cultural perspective;
- Not use any of the School's sites or ICT facilities to provide comments to journalists, politicians or lobby groups other than in the course of official duties/direct role and subject to the requirements of this policy;
- Only publicly available information may be disclosed or discussed;
- No impersonation, or false representation, of or about another person;
- No posting, accessing or sharing of any material (including images) that is fraudulent, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, of a sexual nature, profane (whether concealed by symbols or not), racist, sexist, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful; the School has strong content filters and blocking software, with a reporting system to management which identifies attempted access to blocked sites, including which computer/laptop attempts access;
- No use of the School's ICT resources to conduct personal relationships;

- No use of a work email address to register personal Social Media accounts or to sign-up to third party sites;
- No use of Social Media for business-related internal communications without express sanction by the School;
- Comply with the Terms of Service of other Social Media sites;
- No infringement of any intellectual property rights, including those of the School; be aware that intellectual property rights may be held by the original author as well as the platform on which it is posted. See: Intellectual Property Policy (4.2).

### 4.3 Personal use of Social Media

The School acknowledges members of the School Community may choose to use Social Media in their capacity as private citizens. The School encourages anyone who does so to use good judgement when disclosing personal information.

In their capacity as private citizens, members of the School Community must ensure that their online behaviour is lawful and complies with all applicable policies of the School.

The key obligations members of the School Community must follow in their personal use of Social Media are as follows:

- Ensure it is clearly stated that any views expressed are purely personal, so that comments are not perceived to be made by, or on behalf of, the School;
- Do not post information about your role at the School or current involvement/activities undertaken with the School unless that information is already in the public domain;
- Comply with the terms of the Social Media site being used;
- Avoid any criticism of any member of the School Community;
- When students are, or are likely to be, in photos, first check with the Marketing and Communications team for guidance on appropriateness and individual student opt-out instruction; See: Photography and Film Policy (4.3.2);
- Be aware your anonymity online is not guaranteed; anyone posting material online should assume that their identity and their connection with the School is ascertainable.

In addition, members of the School Community must not at any time use Social Media to make any comment or posting (including images):

- That may embarrass or adversely affect the integrity or reputation of the School;
- That creates a perception that a comment or posting is made by, or on behalf of, or endorsed by the School;
- That is about the School or any member of the School Community, former student or stakeholder of the School otherwise than in accordance with this policy;
- In the case of staff members, to make adverse comment about your employment whether at the School or any other place of employment (if applicable); the School has internal processes for resolving any complaints of this nature concerning the School;
- To respond to any negative references about the School made by other users on Social Media. You are encouraged to report to The Director of the School (Director), Executive Director or Director of Development anything you may notice that may harm the School's reputation, pose a risk to the School or is in breach of this policy or is untrue and may cause an adverse effect to the School or any member of the School Community;
- On personal websites or social platforms that are unsuitable for general viewing (including ensuring there are no links to inappropriate sites);

- That criticise the School, the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS), a State or the Commonwealth Government, a Member of Parliament or their respective policies, such that that they could be perceived to have an impact on your ability to work professionally and be uncompromised.
- To disclose confidential information or internal policies, procedures and other operational information not otherwise available in the public domain;
- That are, or could be, perceived to be criticisms of the School's donors, sponsors, Staff Members, Board members or other stakeholders;
- That reference or involve the School in any way, e.g., photos that suggest or show misconduct or which otherwise damages the reputation of the School.

### 4.4 Social Media Used to Support Student Learning:

Social Media may be used by staff to support student learning if there is an appropriate educational purpose. This means that Social Media use:

- Is directly related to achieving learning outcomes identified in subjects taught by the School and approved by the Director or their delegate;
- Offers benefits for student learning that may not be able to be met in face-to-face contexts or through the use of other technologies;
- Social Media use must be planned and reflected in curriculum documents;

#### 5. PROCEDURES

### 5.1 Seeking further guidance and information:

The requirements, guidelines and general information provided in this policy are not exhaustive and the very nature of Social Media means it is constantly evolving. When accessing and using Social Media, caution and common sense should be employed, and the consequences considered.

All members of the School Community are strongly encouraged to contact the Director, Executive Director, Director of Development, Head of Boarding or Marketing and Communications team if there are any concerns or guidance regarding:

- Whether to become involved in Social Media commentary or discussions;
- Privacy or reputational concerns as a result of Social Media posts;
- Information online of which you consider the School needs to be aware; this includes inappropriate activity on Social Media by any member of the School Community.

As much information as possible should be provided to assist with obtaining a resolution, this includes links and/or screenshots.

Social Media posts are automatically saved on the School's Social Media platforms. Social Media plans are created each week by the Media and Communications team and provided to the Director for approval. See: Records & Archives Management Policy 4.1.1/Section - Storage of electronic records (policy pending).

# 5.2 Guidelines for the practice of 'following', 'follow-back' and 'tagging' students:

The School's social media accounts are only permitted to Follow current full-time students at the School. No other categories of students who attend or participate in School Activities are to be Followed by the School or Staff Members.

The decision to 'Follow back' any external organisations or individual who Follows the School must be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Marketing and Communications. Any decision will be assessed on the basis of the site's content/feed and whether it is relevant content to the School.

The practice of 'tagging' students by the School is only permitted for students in Level 8 or Postgraduate year, and only when the student is featured in any photo. These students, or their parents/carers, may opt out by advising the School if they do not wish to be, or their child to be, tagged.

## 5.3 Registering the School's Social Media sites:

All Social Media accounts used by the School may only be registered in the name of the School. The Marketing and Communications team is responsible for management of all accounts, including all registration and security details.

## 5.4 Repost on the School's Social Media sites:

From time to time, the School reposts relevant information on its Social Media accounts. Reposted items must align with the School's development, marketing and communication strategies, and must not conflict with current sponsorship or funding agreements or the School's own income generation campaigns (e.g., ticket sales, fundraising campaigns). See: Photography, Film and Recording Policy (4.3.2).

# 5.5 Breach of Policy/Disciplinary Actions:

Breaches of this policy by Board members, all Staff Members, students, contractors and sub-contractors of the School may be considered as misconduct. The School will impose discipline that fits the circumstances of the individual breach of this policy; this may include, but is not limited to:

- Reprimand;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion;
- Written warning (for Staff Members);
- Reassignment of job duties;
- Termination of employment;
- Termination of contract of a consultant or contractor.

Breaches of this policy by third parties (including, but not limited to visitors and Volunteers) will be dealt with by the Board in accordance with any contractual arrangements between the third party and The School. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, termination of contract.

The Marketing and Communications team monitor Social Media and manage the School's reputation online. Where necessary, a member of the Development team will contact members of the School Community to discuss their online behaviour and provide direction and possibly supervision.