



# Social Media Guidelines for School Based Parent Groups

## INTRODUCTION

Parents at Catholic schools today enjoy the networking and friendship opportunities that being a member of the school community provides. It is subsequently expected that parents will uphold the ethos of the school within and without, in all social media interactions. Social media can be, when appropriate, an effective educative and social tool and is often used by the community to disseminate news, information, dates of events and updates on activities. Catholic School Parents WA (CSPWA) expects parents to use social media in a respectful and responsible manner.

Reputation management and careful planning are key components to establishing social media accounts. CSPWA recommends that P&Fs work with the school to utilise already established social media sites or their website. P&Fs can supply information or promotional messages to the Principal or their delegate and request that this information be placed on the school's website or school social media account for the P&F.

If your school does not have a social media site and the Principal approves the P&F establishing one, P&Fs should familiarise themselves with the relevant Catholic Education Commission WA policies which are named below. As a 'subcommittee' of the school, the P&F must ensure that they adhere to the appropriate policies.

**No social media page which includes the school's name or logo e.g. 'St. Mary's Yr 4 page' can be created without the express permission of the Principal.**

## RATIONALE

The purpose of these guidelines is to set expectations of behaviour for the use of social media that are consistent with the broader values and expectations of Catholic School Parents WA throughout our school communities.

## DEFINITION

**Social media** - refers to all social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube and WhatsApp amongst others.

**Parents** - parents and carers of students at the schools.

## **SCOPE - Who these guidelines apply to**

Parents and carers of students currently attending a Catholic school, who use, administer and/or oversee any social media utilised by the community.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As parents, we are expected to demonstrate respect to others, including staff, students, parents and members of the wider school community. Parents should also give due respect to the reputation and good name of the school.

When using an authorised school social media page, parents are expected to ensure that they:

- comment, post and respond only to content related to the P&F, the school community or in reply to a post left by the administrator on behalf of the P&F;
- conduct professional and courteous conversation;
- respect the rights and confidentiality of others;

and do not:

- comment in relation to any individual;
- impersonate or falsely represent another person;
- bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others;
- make defamatory comments;
- use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the Community
- post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic or incites violence against others;
- harm the reputation and good standing of the school community or those within the school community;
- film, photograph or record members of the school community without express permission of the school or post film, photographs or recordings without express permission of the person and the school.

## **POSTS**

Posts are the key element to a social media site. They can help you connect with your audience and reflect the vibrancy of the P&F. Think about the tone of posts; make them open-ended and friendly and take the opportunity to engage your audience in a discussion.

Good example: *Parents, come along to the next P&F meeting and help us do great things for the school!*

Bad example: *Next P&F meeting Tuesday. If there aren't enough attendees, fundraising events will be cancelled.*

Plan how you will politely respond to controversial posts. It's important that the responses stay neutral and don't become personal.

Be transparent but always check you aren't releasing information that is sensitive, confidential, protected under privacy laws or not already in the public domain. P&Fs should seek advice from CSPWA in relation to these issues.

## PROMOTION

Consider how you will get individuals to 'like' or 'follow' the P&F social media pages. Ask your Principal if you could promote the social media accounts through the school newsletter and website, and at relevant parent orientation sessions.

Only families currently enrolled in the class should be admitted to class Facebook/communication pages. Extended family members should not be members of school generated class pages.

## ADMINISTRATOR HOURS

Recognising that social media is a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week medium, accounts like Facebook need to be monitored after hours, on weekends and on holidays. Do you have one or more P&F members prepared to do this? Are there better promotional avenues like your school website and school Facebook site that you could use?

**Facebook Administrators must be approved by the Principal.**

## ACCOUNTS

Before establishing a social media account, it is important that you discuss the scope, audience and content of the site with the school Principal. P&Fs should read the social media sites' Terms and Conditions carefully before setting up accounts. Facebook accounts should be established using the Company, Organisation or Institution section.

A generic email address, such as the P&F email recently set up by CEWA, must be used as your login so multiple people can have access to the account including the school Principal. **Schools and P&Fs should not establish pages that are linked in any way to personal accounts.**

When establishing the account set the 'Profanity Blocklist' to strong and add any words you feel are applicable.

## PRIVACY

The P&F Terms of Reference Guidelines state that "The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, X and Instagram must comply with CEWA's Information Stewardship Executive Directive." The Directive can be viewed here: <https://policy.cewa.edu.au/executive-directive/information-stewardship/>.

It is important that this Directive is read before making the decision to establish a social media presence.

## PHOTOS

P&Fs cannot upload photos of school staff or students to any social networking site. P&Fs should work with the school to have photos placed on the school website ensuring all the relevant permissions are in place and the students' full names are not published in accordance with the school's policy. P&Fs can then link from the social media site back to the school website.

## **A few other points...**

P&Fs should not promote businesses or business initiatives on the P&F social media site as it may infer endorsement.

P&Fs should take care not to upload material that infringes existing copyright or other intellectual property rights.

**CONTACT:** CSPWA on 9338 9985 or by email [support@csp.wa.edu.au](mailto:support@csp.wa.edu.au)

## **RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

The following risks and mitigation strategies should be considered when planning and establishing any social media account.

- RISK: A P&F or school social media presence provides a forum for discussion and grievances to occur in a public arena.
- RISK: Delays in responding to and/or removing inappropriate posts would allow key stakeholders (parents) to view and contribute to inappropriate posts.
- RISK: With the changing nature of P&Fs, there may not always be a designated administrator.
- MITIGATION: Constant monitoring and response to requests in a timely manner would require the social media site administrators to monitor the site continuously, compose responses, seek approval of the Principal and then post a response.
- MITIGATION: Both the school website and the social media site will need to present equivalent information and content in terms of currency and quality.
- MITIGATION: A 'Social Media Administrator' should be a designated position within the P&F Committee or allocated to an existing committee position and if not filled at an ACM, the social media presence be immediately withdrawn from public view.

## **NEED TO KNOW...**

- Terms and conditions and site permission need to be clearly read, understood and constantly monitored for any updates or changes.
- All activities need to be treated publicly with the knowledge that it is never completely removed from the internet.
- Be aware that advertisements on Facebook could be seen as being endorsed by the school/P&F.
- Please remember that not all families access social media, so the information shared needs to be available via other means, like the school website or newsletter.
- Requesting to join and follow school social media accounts is voluntary.

## **CYBERSAFETY AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT**

Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) has various teams who support schools in the areas of ICT, dispute and complaint resolution, communications and websites.

For more information on Facebook safety please visit:  
<https://about.meta.com/actions/safety>.

## **MISUSE**

All reports of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in a notification to police. Parents must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by police.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

CEWA Directives:

Information Stewardship: <https://policy.cewa.edu.au/executive-directive/information-stewardship/>

Dispute and Complaint Resolution: <https://policy.cewa.edu.au/executive-directive/dispute-and-complaint-resolution/>

## P&F SOCIAL MEDIA ESTABLISHMENT CHECKLIST

Catholic School Parents WA (CSPWA) recommends that P&Fs utilise the school's already established social media sites or website. If your school does not have an established social media site and the Principal is comfortable with the P&F establishing an account, this checklist highlights best practice and ongoing responsibilities in relation to establishing and maintaining these accounts.

Please circle 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions to assess suitability

Have you discussed establishing a school P&F social media site with the school Principal?	Yes	No
Have you considered asking the Principal if you can supply P&F information/messages to be placed on the school website or the school's Facebook/Instagram account instead of establishing new social media accounts?	Yes	No
Social media accounts like Facebook need to be monitored after hours, on weekends and on holidays. Do you have one or more P&F members prepared to do this? (P&Fs should diligently monitor all accounts and immediately remove any offending posts. Post from businesses should also be removed as they infer endorsement by the P&F and by inference the school.	Yes	No
Have your Social Media administrators been approved by the school Principal?	Yes	No
Do you have a generic email account that can be used to establish the account, accessible by a range of individuals who can act as site administrators?	Yes	No
Have you ensured no photos of students or school staff will be/can be uploaded to the accounts? (P&Fs should work with the school to have photos placed on the school website ensuring all the relevant permissions are in place and students' full names are not published. P&Fs can then link from the social media site back to the school website).	Yes	No
Do you have a process to ensure that only current families in the class/school should be admitted to class pages?	Yes	No
Has the P&F ensured that the privacy of students, their parents/guardians and staff are not compromised by the initiative?	Yes	No
Have you established: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will write the posts?</li> <li>• The correct tone for the posts and the type of messages you want to post.</li> <li>• Who will approve the posts? (Generally Principal and/or P&amp;F Chair)</li> </ul>	Yes	No
Have you considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you respond to posts – negative and positive?</li> <li>• Who will give approval to respond to these posts? (Principal/P&amp;F Chair?)</li> </ul>	Yes	No
Have you spoken to P&F members about their social media security settings?	Yes	No
Have you explained that if they 'like' or 'follow' the page they should consider making sure their accounts can remain private?	Yes	No
Have you ensured no content (intellectual property, music, TV or film footage) will be uploaded without explicit approval from the content owner?	Yes	No
Have you read the Terms of Service on the nominated social media sites? e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms">http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.youtube.com/static?template=terms">http://www.youtube.com/static?template=terms</a></li> </ul>	Yes	No
Have you read the CEWA <i>Information Stewardship</i> Executive Directive? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://policy.cewa.edu.au/executive-directive/information-stewardship/">https://policy.cewa.edu.au/executive-directive/information-stewardship/</a></li> </ul>	Yes	No