

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Terrigal



Policy of Parent and Carer Use of Social Media

Rationale:

Our Lady Star of the Sea is a community which is inspired by our Catholic Faith and Values and a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. We endeavour to develop and support positive relationships within the school and parish community and to encourage communication that is constructive, honest and courteous. The community recognises that opportunities exist to enhance communication and sharing through various forms of social media – and seeks to utilise these in ways that are positive and constructive. The principles of Catholic Social Teachings and the Australian Government's Privacy Act and Australian Privacy Principles underpin this Policy.

This policy addresses social media use by parents and carers - as well as staff. This relates to official forums such as the Twitter and Facebook page, but also other forums where the school or individuals may be named. The school recognises that primary aged children should not be engaging in social media – and teaches this as part of its curriculum.

At Our Lady Star of the Sea, we believe that:

All members of the school community, parents and teachers:

- Have the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Should be treated in a caring and polite manner.
- Need to uphold and comply with applicable state and federal laws, including privacy and defamation.
- Need to uphold and comply with applicable Diocesan Schools System (DSS) and school policies.
- Should recognise that social media forums are not private domains and as such consideration of other people's privacy is paramount.

Aims:

- To provide a proactive and positive approach to all types of communication within the school community.
- To provide guidelines for the use of social media within the school context, so that it can play a valuable role in building school spirit, as well as supporting and informing the school community.
- To encourage all members of the school community to act in a constructive, polite and respectful manner.
- To ensure that conversations within the community and in social media forums remain positive and constructive.
- To ensure that any concerns, challenges or feedback are directed to the school rather than posted to social media.
- To prevent the posting of malicious, misleading and incorrect content.

In practice:

- All communications within the school community, including those online should be positive and constructive, respecting the values of the school.

- All members of the school community of Our Lady Star of the Sea are encouraged to be positive and proactive in their interactions with other members of the community.
- Social media forums are not private and all postings to such should be made with an expectation that the post is public and may be broadly accessed and read and passed on.
- There are state and federal laws and school policies that all users must comply with.
- While parents and carers are allowed to take photos of their children at school events, the publishing of images of other people's children on social media without the consent of the parent is not permitted.
- Reproducing school documents (copying, scanning or photographing) is not permitted on social media forums, without the approval of the school principal.
- The school should be the first point of reference for all parental concerns or questions (not social media) and therefore parents are expected to work collaboratively with the school to resolve any issues and to follow the 'Communication Flowchart for Parents'.

Mr Robert Peers

Principal August 2015

To be reviewed in 2018