



No. 5218

# Sunbury & Macedon Ranges Specialist School

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## SOCIAL NETWORKING AND BLOGGING WEBSITE POLICY

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

### STATEMENT:

- **“Social network”** sites include those websites designed to provide online communities the opportunity to interact with others and where content visible on the page can be generated by those other than the person who signed up for the account. For example ,sites include (but are not limited to) Facebook, Instagram, Myspace, LinkedIn, Nexopia, Bebo, Hi5, StudiVZ, Decayenne, Tagged, XING, Badoo, Skyrock, Friendster, Mixi, Multiply, Orkut, Wretch, Xiaonei, Snapchat, kik, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Google+, Twitter, Skype, Viber, BBM, Habbo, Tumblir, Flixster, Mylife, Flickr, Xanga, Weeworld and Cyworld.
- **“Blogs”** (and microblogs) are sites where the content is entirely generated and controlled by the person who signed up for the site. This includes self-created blogs and accounts at sites such as Twitter, Tumblr, Plurk, Squeelr, Jaiku and identi.ca.
- **“Staff”** is defined as all employees of Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School whether employed by School Council or the Department of Education and Training.
- The Equal Opportunity act (1995) defines **“The Workplace”** as: “Anywhere I am when I am or who I am dealing with because of my work.” In other words, the act covers interaction between staff members even when they are outside the hours and physical confines of the school.

**RATIONALE:**

- To provide Staff with guidelines for the safe and acceptable use of Facebook and other social network sites in relation to interaction with other staff and students.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

- It is strongly recommended that staff do not accept social network friend requests from current students and/or parents of students. It is also strongly recommended that staff remove any current students or parents that are currently on their friend list. Staff must disclose personal relationships with students and their families to the Child Safe officer under Child Safe Regulations.
- Staff should be aware of The Education Training and Reform Act 2006, "An Employee must not (a) behave in any way which would impair the employee's influence over students or standing in the community generally, or (b) during or outside the hours of duty, act in any way unbecoming his or her position." Breaching these guidelines can result in disciplinary action. "The Secretary, after investigation, may take action against an employee who- conducts himself or herself in a disgraceful, improper or unbecoming manner in an official capacity or otherwise."
- Staff should be aware that they are legally responsible for all content on their social network sites; this includes text, images, audio and video posted by those on their friends list.
- Staff should be aware that all material posted on their social network sites should be considered public and may be shared and viewed by those outside their circle of permitted viewers.
- Facebook or other social network pages maintained by classes for educational purposes must have written protocols and guidelines established and followed by all users and friends.
- In accordance with The Information Privacy Act, staff are not permitted to discuss student details on their social networking sites. This includes, but is not limited to, any information relating to student behaviour, domestic conditions, academic achievement, medical conditions or death. No student names are to appear on staff social networking sites.
- In accordance with the Equal Opportunity Act private email accounts and social network sites must not be used to publish, send, or distribute material to other staff or students that is harassing, obscene or threatening, nor may it contain content that may be considered unlawfully discriminatory, offensive or disruptive. This includes sexually oriented messages or images and sexual harassment messages.
- Blogs or microblogging accounts maintained by individual staff members should not be promoted or shared with students unless they are maintained specifically for educational purposes.

- Users of social networking sites during school hours should be aware of the “Acceptable use of The Internet, Email and Other Electronic Communication” policy.
- This policy should be included as part of the new staff induction procedure and made clear to all new staff before they start work at Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School.

#### **REFERENCES:**

SMRSS Policy – Acceptable use of the Internet, Email and Other Electronic Communication.

SMRSS - e-Smart Policy

DET Acceptable Use Policy for ICT Resources- June 2020

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#### **EVALUATION:**

- This policy will be reviewed annually.

**THIS POLICY HAS BEEN RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL**

Joanne Nolan  
Principal

Mark Davie... ....  
President of School Council

Date: 1/02/2021

Review due: 2023