	Topic:	Social Media – Student Use
MERCY COLLEGE MISERICORDIA LOVE IN ACTION	Policy No:	B-3B
	Policy Area:	Education
	Date For Review:	2022

1. Rationale

Social media offers engagement with other students, both in Australia and overseas; colleagues and friends for educational purposes, and the world at large. Mercy College supports and encourages the use of social media to develop and expand networks and research. This policy has been developed to help protect personal and professional reputations; to use social media forums effectively, and to comply with relevant College policies and procedures.

Social media is a fun part of everyday life, but it can carry risks. This policy is intended to help you avoid any pitfalls, while still making best use of social media for study and research as well as social purposes. Despite the immense opportunities represented by social media, there are significant risks, not least business, legal, and reputational. Social media allow individuals to communicate with a potentially huge audience, and given the interpersonal nature of their form, can blur the lines between a personal voice and an institutional voice. Those using social media in a personal capacity need to bear in mind that their comments could be taken to reflect on Mercy College.

Social Media is a valuable tool and this policy is mandated to ensure the boundaries between the use of Social Media at work and for personal reasons are clear. In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, the practice of communication must be totally honest and reflect the highest standard of accountability and sensitivity to human rights and relationships.

2. Definitions

"Social Media" - Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. (Oxford Dictionary)

Social media (sometimes referred to as social networking or Web 2.0 technologies) are online services, apps and tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information. They can include forums, blogs, wikis, social networking websites, and any other websites that allow individual users to upload and share content. Social media services and tools can involve a combination of technology, telecommunications and social interaction. They can use a variety of different formats, for example text, pictures, video and audio. Social media can provide unique opportunities for users to communicate and share information, and to build networks locally, nationally, and internationally. Information shared may include (but is not limited to) personal information, opinions, research, commentary, or business information.

Social media may include (although is not limited to):

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Yammer).
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, Instagram, YouTube).
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs (e.g. SharePoint, Wordpress).
- Micro-blogging (e.g.Twitter).
- Wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia, Microsoft 365, iCloud, Google Docs.).
- Discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups).
- VOD and podcasting (e.g SoundCloud).
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. Steam, Microsoft Live)

- Instant messaging (including SMS).
- Geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare, Facebook check-in).
- Skype, SMS, video calling.

Social Media Examples:

Blogs – A blog is a "web log". Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. Usually, viewers can comment, ask questions, share information and subscribe. A typical blog combines text, images, and links.

Forums / boards – An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site. Users can post messages and comment on other messages. Other types of social media often incorporate forums, sometimes with their own social conventions and etiquette (or 'netiquette').

Micro-blogs – A micro-blog has a similar purpose to a blog, except that entries are smaller - usually limited to a certain number of characters (e.g. 140). A popular example is Twitter™. It allows users to 'follow' one another so that they are notified when a new update is posted. Users can connect quickly and through many different tools such as their mobile phone.

Photo sharing sites – A photo sharing site, such as Flickr®, allows users to upload images and is useful for categorising and organising pictures. They allow other users to comment on them, or re-use them with permission.

Social bookmarking – Social bookmarking is used for saving the address of a website or item of content and adding a tag to allow other users to easily find your research. It is useful for organising and sharing links, and for keeping track of links recommended by others. Delicious™, Digg™, and Reddit are popular examples.

Social networking websites – Social networking websites focus on building online communities of people who share interests. Popular examples include MySpace™, Facebook® and LinkedIn®. Users can build their own profile page, join groups, share photos and videos, post messages, and run other applications.

Video sharing sites – A video sharing site allows users to upload video clips to be stored on the server, allowing other users to view them. YouTube™ is a popular example.

Virtual worlds – Virtual worlds such as Second Life® are online places where users can create representations of themselves (avatars) and socialise with other residents.

Wikis – A wiki is a website using 'wiki software' that allows web pages to be created, interlinked, and edited by any user. The most well-known wiki is Wikipedia® – an online encyclopaedia.

3.   Principles

3.1   The Internet, email and mobile phones have created new methods of social interaction and communication for people to stay in touch with friends and make new ones. Most interactions using these technologies are positive; however, some are not.

3.2   The school has the right to check all written, graphic, audio and other materials created, produced, communicated, stored or accessed on school ICT by students, including emails. The school also has the right to check all written graphic, audio and other materials created, produced, communicated, stored or accessed where the content relates to the College, students, staff or member of the Mercy College community.

3.3   Students shall be made aware that access to ICT, the Internet and email can expose them to inappropriate material or potential harm.

3.4   Students shall take personal responsibility when using the school's ICT services by protecting their personal information and data, maintaining the required level of security, respecting the privacy of others, respecting the legal boundaries of licensing and copyright, using language appropriate to the school's expectations and taking good care of all ICT equipment.

3.5   E-mail has the same permanence and legal status as written hardcopy (paper) documents and may be subject to disclosure obligations in exactly the same way. Copies of e-mails may therefore have to be made available to third parties.

3.6　Students personal safety is important and should be aware…

- ***That people on the Internet may not be who they say they are*** – people can hide their identities and pretend to be someone they are not. If something or someone sounds too good to be true, it probably is or they probably are.
- ***Not to give out your or others' personal information*** on websites, personal 'blogs' and in chat-rooms, including your full name, address, contact phone numbers, financial information, personal details about your life or family, your photograph or your user name/s and passwords.
- ***To tell an adult or your parents*** if someone sends or posts something that is obscene or that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- ***To take an adult with you*** if you are going to meet an online friend in person for the first time. Meet in a public place during the day, and never agree to meet at a private house or accommodation, at night or in deserted places.

4.　Procedures

4.1　Mercy College is committed to ensuring all students are aware of standards for the use of ICT within the school environment. Consequently, unacceptable use shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and disciplinary action shall be taken against any student who breaches this policy.

4.2　Mercy College shall identify acceptable and unacceptable use ICT and is committed to regularly updating this policy.

4.2.1　Acceptable use shall include, but it is not limited to behaviours that:
- Take care when posting to any public website, that comments do not harm the reputation of the school – even if their online activities are entirely unrelated to the school.
- Always gain the permission of all individuals before uploading images, videos and/or recordings.
- Always seek to ensure that they consider their personal reputation before uploading any material.
- Take steps to ensure that any person making contact via a social networking website is who they claim to be, before allowing them access to your personal information.
- Ensure that personal information is not accessible via a **'Public'** setting, but ensure that it is set to a **'Friends'** only level of visibility.
- Take steps to ensure that you protect yourself when online. Do not publish personal information e.g. addresses, birthdays, telephone numbers. Always protect your password and login details.
- Report any breaches of the Acceptable Use Agreement.

4.2.2　Unacceptable use shall include, but it is not limited to behaviours that:
- Request/Add any staff member to their 'friends list'.
- Name the school.
- Post any comment which may harm the reputation of the College i.e. comments about the school, teachers, photos/videos of unacceptable behaviour.
- Post any material clearly identifying the school uniform.
- Post any material clearly identifying any member of staff.
- Comment on any other student or their actions.
- Post any material/comments that might upset, threaten or embarrass any other students, or staff members.
- Comment on any member of the Mercy College community (including teachers, parents, board members, staff members, other students).
- Post any material which may bring into question your good reputation.
- Post any material that can be linked to the Mercy College that may damage the reputation of the school.
- Post any material clearly identifying yourself, any other student, or any member of staff, which could potentially be used to embarrass, harass, or defame.
- Post any comments or materials that are in contrast with the beliefs of the Catholic Church, Mercy Vision and Values and the School Ethos.

5.   References

Bishops of Western Australia 2009, Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015
Catholic Education Commission policy statement 2-C4 Harassment, Unlawful Discrimination, Victimisation and
          Bullying
Catholic Education Commission policy statement 2-C15 Information and Communication Technology Use by Staff
Department of Education (WA) Students Online Policy and Guidelines endorsed by Director General on 19
          September 2014.
Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)
Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996
Criminal Code Act (WA)
Cybercrime Act 2001 (Cth)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

6.   Related Documents

Mercy College policy statement B-3A Information and Communication Technology – Student Use
Mercy College policy statement B-3C Mobile Phone Policy
Mercy College policy statement D-9 Dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence - Students
Mercy College policy statement C-5A Information and Communication Technology – Staff Use
Mercy College policy statement C-5B Social Media – Staff Use

7.   Review History

Year of Review	Reviewed By	Amendments/Review
2014		Originally released
2015	**Julie Hornby**	Reviewed
2020	**Donna Bird**	Reviewed

8.   Next Review

Year	Mercy College Standing Committee Responsible
2022	**Donna Bird**