



Social Media Statement Staff

Preamble

Bethania Lutheran School (the 'School') realises that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of employees engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is an essential part of 21st century learning. Accordingly, appropriate engagement with, and modelling of technology use is the responsibility of all Bethania Lutheran School employees. To this aim, the School has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for employees when participating in online social media activities.

These Social Media guidelines encourage all Bethania Lutheran School employees to:

- Participate in online social activities;
- Manage their own digital personas; and
- Model good digital citizenship to students through demonstration of appropriate social media use.

It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by the persons to whom this Statement applies is a reflection on the entire School. Accordingly, by accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or any other Social Media space for classroom, School or personal use* employees agree to abide by these guidelines. Employees are requested to read these guidelines carefully before posting or commenting on any blog or creating any classroom blog, wiki and/or podcast.

*This policy applies to employee's personal use of Social Media platforms where the employee:

- is identifiable as a School employee; or
- makes reference to the School, the School's operations and/ or a School related issue/s.

Definitions

Social Media

Social media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone (even private individuals) to publish or access information. Social Media may include (although is not limited to):

- social networking sites (eg Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer);
- video and photo sharing websites (eg Flickr, Youtube);
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- blogs hosted by media outlets (eg 'comments' or 'your say' feature on theage.com.au);
- micro-blogging (eg Twitter);
- wikis and online collaborations (eg Wikipedia);
- forums, discussion boards and groups (eg Google groups, Whirlpool);
- video on demand and podcasting;
- online multiplayer gaming platforms (eg World of Warcraft, Second life);
- electronic messaging (including email and SMS);
- geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare).

Statement

Professional Use of Social Media

Overview

Bethania Lutheran School employees are personally responsible for any content they publish on Social Media spaces. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world.

By way of example, should a School staff member identify themselves as a Lutheran School employee on a Social Media space, that staff member would become connected to a range of other colleagues, students, parents and wider School community members online. As such, online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you would use face-to-face. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time.

Employees Authorised to Comment

Bethania Lutheran School employees are authorised to comment on behalf of the School in respect of matters approved by the Principal in writing. Similarly, employees must only comment in respect of such matters on Social Media accounts approved by the Principal in writing.

As is the case in respect of all other capacities in which employees may represent the School, it is expected that appropriate personal and professional boundaries, and the demonstration of good digital citizenship will be maintained at all times when commenting on behalf of the School in respect of matters approved by the Principal.

Once authorised to comment you must:

- Disclose you are an employee of Bethania Lutheran School and use only your own identity;
- Comment only on your area of expertise and authority and only on information considered to be for the public domain;
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading; and
- Ensure you are not the first to make an announcement (unless specifically given permission to do so).

Disclaimers:

- Classroom blogs do not require a disclaimer, but teachers are encouraged to moderate content contributed by students.

Accessibility – Student Content:

All interactions between employees and students via Social Media platforms must occur only in an educational context and be fully transparent (that is, readily accessible for viewing by the Principal /the Principal's nominee at all times). To this intent, employees are requested to provide, at the request of the Principal from time to time, a record of all password/ access codes used in respect of Social Media platforms by a student/s in the educational context.

Personal Use of Social Media

Overview

Bethania Lutheran School recognises that employees may wish to use social media in their personal lives. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit employees' personal expression or online activities.

However, employees should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the School via their personal use of Social Media when they can be identified as a Bethania Lutheran School employee, or they make reference to the School, the School's operations and/ or a School related issue/s.

Accordingly, the following points are designed for employees' protection when using social media in such circumstances to ensure the risk of such damage is minimised:

- Bethania Lutheran School employees are personally responsible for all comments/information they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.
- Your online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face, be in accordance with the Lutheran ethos and the highest professional Standards;

- By posting your comments and having online conversations etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world. Be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings what you 'say' online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.
- Comments related to the School are not to be made on social media sites
- Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues and/ or parents are concerned. No photographs of students of the School (with the exception of an employee/s own children where approved by the relevant employee/s from time to time) are to be posted.
- Before posting personal photographs or 'liking' images or other web links, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.
- Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and by that token an extension of your professional life and your classroom/school. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall - is it really correct to put it online?
- Staff must not accept students as 'friends' on their social network sites or inter-act with students on social networking sites.
- Staff are not to accept ex-students or parents of current students as friends on their social network sites.
- Microblogging (Twitter etc.) Comments made using such media are not protected by privacy settings. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and again refrain from any comment that could be deemed unprofessional. When using / contributing to a Social Media space/s in a personal capacity, employees are only authorised to comment on behalf of the School in respect of matters approved by the Principal in writing. Similarly, employees must only comment in respect of such matters on Social Media accounts approved by the Principal in writing. When authorised to comment on behalf of the School in a personal capacity, employees must follow the same guidelines that would apply to them if authorised to comment in their professional capacity.

General

Guidelines – Professional and Personal Use

The following guidelines apply to both professional and personal use of social media:

- You must adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant Social Media platform/ website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, child protection, discrimination, harassment, other applicable laws and the following Bethania Lutheran School policies: Privacy Statement, Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Workplace Harassment Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff-student interaction on Social Media spaces must occur only in a professional and educational (ie not a personal) context;
- You must ensure that you do not use or disclose any confidential information, post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;

- Staff must not discuss students or co-workers or publicly criticise School policies or personnel on Social Media sites;
- Ensure you do not make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the School's reputation or bring it into disrepute;
- The School's Workplace Harassment policy applies to activities which are both online and in the physical workplace. Workplace bullying and harassment includes any bullying or harassing comments employees make online, even on their own private social networks or out of office hours;
- If you come across positive or negative remarks about the School and/ or its operations online that you believe are important, you may pass those posts to the Principal who will consider such comments on a case by case basis.

Copyright and Fair Use

Copyright, intellectual property and fair use guidelines must be complied with and respected.

A hyperlink to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarise and give credit where it is due. When using a hyperlink, be sure that the content is appropriate and adheres to School policy. It is recommended that blogs be licensed under a creative commons licence.

Profiles and Identity

- Remember your association and responsibility with Bethania Lutheran School in online social environments. For example, if you identify yourself as a School employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students. How you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.
- No last names, School names, addresses or phone numbers should appear on blogs or wikis.
- Be cautious how you setup online profiles, bios, avatars, etc. For example: when uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself, make sure you select a School appropriate image;
- adhere to the School's acceptable use policy;
- remember not to utilise protected images. Images should be available under Creative Commons or your own.

Compliance/ Breach of this Policy

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, child protection or criminal laws, discrimination, or some other contravention of the law.

Those who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment.

It is important to note that reports of cyber bullying and other technology abuses may result in a notification to the Policy or other relevant authority/ies where the School is legally obliged to do so.