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Hazelwood North Primary School

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

 **INTRODUCTION**

All those who are part of the Hazelwood North Primary School community, students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, have the right to benefit from the opportunities that exist from being members of our community. They should all behave within and outside of the School in such a manner that the image of the School is not negatively affected or brought into disrepute.

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to inform and guide the way Hazelwood North Primary School and its staff interact via social media. This policy has been developed to protect the school’s students, staff, parents, assets and reputation through clear protocols for use of social media in official and personal capacities.

**2. BACKGROUND**

Social Media can be an effective business and social tool and that such media is commonly used by the school community to express their views, comments, ideas and criticism on a whole range of issues. Enabled by the internet, social media provides the capacity to engage, inform, educate and, importantly, interact with the school community and the media. It has the distinct advantage in its capacity to enable relevant, reliable and immediate interaction, at any time and location.

**3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all employees, students, parents, care givers & wider school community of Hazelwood North Primary School and should be read in conjunction with other policies related to behaviour, professional conduct and responsibilities, and use of information and communication technologies. These include policies issued by external bodies such as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

**4. DEFINITION**

Social media is the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms. It encompasses popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and also includes blogs, forums, wikis, photo galleries and videos.

**5. POLICY**

5.1. Hazelwood North Primary School community members are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected in a physical work environment. This includes:

· Being impartial and professional

· Behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment

· Dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential

· Being sensitive to the diversity of colleagues, peers, students and the community

· Taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest or perceptions thereof

· Protecting the integrity and reputation of Hazelwood North Primary School, its students, student parents and staff

· Complying with applicable laws and legislation, including copyright, intellectual property, privacy, financial disclosure, defamation and other such applicable laws

· Protecting the privacy and security of Hazelwood North Primary School, its employees, students, student parents, partners and suppliers.

5.2. All official communication via social media must be authorised.

5.2.1. Only authorised employees may create social media identities, profiles or accounts that use the Hazelwood North Primary Schools name, emblem or brand, or are designed to represent the school in any way.

5.2.2. Only authorised employees may officially represent Hazelwood North Primary School, and only in authorised social media platforms, as outlined in this policy.

5.2.2.1. Hazelwood North Primary School has approved the use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WordPress as the School’s social media platforms. No other platforms are to be used unless otherwise authorised by the Principal.

5.2.2.2. Hazelwood North Primary School has approved the positions of the Principal, Team Leaders and Administration, as the school’s official representatives to use social media. No other employees are to officially represent the School unless otherwise authorised by the Principal.

5.2.2.3. Staff and students posting comments on official School communications should observe the standards of conduct and behaviour above (item 5.1).

Hazelwood North Primary School reserves the right to delete official posts or comments that are deemed to be defamatory or offensive.

5.3. Authorised employees using social media in an official capacity are given autonomy to represent Hazelwood North Primary School’s views in an ongoing conversation with the public, parents and students. However, there are occasions when content must be reviewed by Management. This includes, but is not limited to, content that is:

· Politically sensitive

· Associated with a project or activity deemed to be high risk

· A response to an individual or group that is deemed to be high risk

· Directly quoting another staff member (e.g. a response attributed to the Principal).

5.4. Content communicated via social media should be consistent with content conveyed via other formats (e.g. branding, key messages).

5.5. Information published via social media is a public record and a corporate record for record-keeping purposes.

5.6. Hazelwood North Primary School expects that all employees exercise sound judgement and common sense when using social media, whether at work, home or elsewhere. Employees using social media in a personal capacity must take due care to ensure that any comments, opinions, photographs or contributions made online are their own, as private citizens, and cannot be interpreted as an official statement or position of Hazelwood North Primary School.

**6. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

6.1. The School recognises that you may wish to use social media in your personal life. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit your personal expression or online activities.

6.2. However, School Community members should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the School in certain circumstances via your personal use of social media when you can be identified as a School community member. Accordingly, you should comply with this policy to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimised.

6.3. You are personally responsible for the content published by you, or in your name, in a personal capacity on any form of social media platform.

6.4. Where your comments or profile can identify you as a School community member, you must: · only disclose and discuss publicly available information;

· ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant School policies and the DEECD Code of Ethics.

· expressly state on all postings identifying you as a School community member that the stated views are your own and are not those of the School;

· be polite and respectful to all people you interact with;

· adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws;

**You must not:**

· post 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;

· imply that you are authorised to speak as a representative of the School, nor give the impression that the views you express are those of the School;

· use the identity or likeness of another School Community member;

· imply you are authorised to speak on behalf of the School, or give the impression that any views you express are those of the School;

· use a school email address or any School logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of your personal comment;

· use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in your capacity as a School community member;

· post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another School community member;

· make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the School’s reputation or bring it into disrepute.

 **Legal Liability**

When individuals choose to go public with opinions via a blog, Social Networking Sites or a personal web site, they are legally responsible for their commentary. Individuals can be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. Employees of Hazelwood North Primary School should exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations. The summary position is that you blog (or post on the blogs of others) at your own risk. Outside parties can pursue legal action against you for postings.

**7. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

7.1. Non-compliance with this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, which could lead to termination of employment or legal proceedings.

7.2. Unacceptable use of social media may be a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination or some other contravention of law.

7.3. Hazelwood North Primary School employees who use social media in their own time using their own resources should note that their private comments posted publically could potentially have repercussions at work. Such instances will be reviewed on a case by case basis with consideration to the possible damage to the reputation of Hazelwood North Primary School.

7.4 Parents using school developed social media must also act in accordance with this policy and other related policies and laws. Unacceptable use of school social media will be initially dealt with by school leaders but may also be referred to the Police and action may be taken if laws are broken. Parents are to refrain from making derogatory or inflammatory comments regarding the school, school staff, students or other parents.

**Identification and Reporting Inappropriate use.**

If you notice inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to the School, or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, you should report the circumstances via email to the principal.

Endorsed by School Council 20th October 2014

To be reviewed September 2016