



POLICY: Rangitikei College Board of Trustees

Social Media Policy

Rationale

We recognise that social media provides excellent opportunities to collaborate and communicate with communities and to enhance learning opportunities for students. This policy is to enable teachers, support staff, students and our community to take advantage of the value of these platforms and to promote an open, trusting, collaborative and safe place of work and education.

It is realised that the inappropriate use of social media has the potential to disrupt learning within the school. School staff also need to be protected against unwelcome social media postings, or inadvertently using social media in a way that affects their ability to teach effectively, or potentially, harms their future careers.

The purpose of this policy is to guide the school in:

1. Ensuring the reputation of the school and its staff is protected in online forum,
2. Promote students' safety online,
3. Ensure school use of social media platforms is constructive and beneficial to the school community,

Definitions:

1. Social media includes any website in which visitors, members or subscribers are able to publish content to a larger group. Content shared may include (but is not limited to) personal information, opinions, research, commentary, video, pictures, or other information
2. 'Social media' includes, but is not necessarily limited to:
 - a. Online blogs and discussion forums,
 - b. Media sharing services,
 - c. collaborative spaces,
 - d. Online gaming platforms,
 - e. Media comment forums,
 - f. Online dating platforms.

Examples of social media include, but are not limited to: Twitter, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and comment streams on public websites such as Stuff.

Guidelines - staff:

1. School staff will not invite, accept, or engage in social media communications with students from the school whilst in employment at Rangitikei College, except for when such communications are expressly for school purposes, and clearly identified as such (eg. a specific group set up for a sports team).
2. Staff should not accept any current student of any age, or any ex-student of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
3. Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set privacy levels on their personal social media accounts to the highest level. Consideration of an alias is recommended.
4. Email communications between staff and members of the school community on school matters must be made from a school email account, and not a personal one.
5. Similarly, sharing personal beliefs or other matters not expressly involving the school, should be on personal accounts, and not a school account.
6. Staff are advised to avoid responding to posts or comments that refer to specific individual matters related to the school, or members of its community, on any social media account without first advising a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
7. If any member of staff is aware of any threatening or harmful communications involving any student on social media, they must advise a member of the Pastoral Team (Deans, Counsellor, Senior Leadership Team)

Guidelines – school social media accounts:

1. There are many legitimate uses of social media to promote learning and the interests of the school. For example:
 - a. Class/group Facebook or GoogleClassrom accounts to promote learning
 - b. The official school Facebook and SchoolStream accounts
 - c. Discussion forum focussing on curriculum or learning enhancement,
2. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:
 - a. Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for the designated purpose. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts, and linked to an official school email account.
 - b. The Principal and Head of Department should be informed, and given access to it should it be requested. The Principal has the authority to close the account or site down if it s/he considers it not operating within these guidelines.
 - c. Usage of the site must be restricted to the dedicated purpose.
 - d. Communications on the site must be professional and appropriate, and not inconsistent with school values. This includes any direct links made to external sites.
3. Official school social media accounts must be managed by an administrator(s) appointed by the Principal, and follow clear guidelines. The purpose of these accounts is to achieve some or all of the following:

- a. Communicate useful information to parents/whanau
- b. Celebrate student success
- c. Promote the interests and reputation of the school.

Comments, images or postings not promoting the values of the school must not be published.

- 4. Student images may only be published if parents/caregivers have given permission (as on the Enrolment Form). Generally it is advisable not to tag images of students. It is safer to use captions or write short a description of an image – for example, “Rock climbing at school camp”.

Guidelines – students:

Rangitikei College will not permit the use of social media by students that breaches the College’s values including:

- 1. Plagiarism or breach of copyright when using or repurposing material.
- 2. Claiming a false identity.
- 3. Making promises or statements regarding the College’s operations which are misleading, fraudulent or false.
- 4. Defaming, bullying or discrediting another person or group.
- 5. Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language in content.
- 6. Accessing, downloading or transmitting:
 - a. any kind of sexually explicit material, violent images including graphic images of blood or gore (without educational purpose).
 - b. information on the use and construction of weapons, explosives and other tools of violence or terrorism.
 - c. racist material including: ‘hate speech’; material expressing admiration for views claiming the inherent or moral superiority or inferiority of a particular race, ethnic group, or sexual orientation; racial terms or descriptions; or religious bigotry.
 - d. any other material deemed to be illegal under New Zealand law.
- 7. Compromising the privacy of any person.
- 8. Attempting to gain unauthorised access to, or disrupting the integrity of, the computing resources or data of the College or any other individual or organisation.
- 9. Making a statement or actions that might bring the College into disrepute.
- 10. Committing the College to an action or initiative without appropriate authority.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____

Next review date: September 2022

ASSOCIATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS:

- Staff Digital Responsible Use Agreement
- Rangitikei College Staff Code of Conduct
- *Our Code Our Standards: Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession* (Teaching Council of Aotearoa-New Zealand)
- Student Digital Citizenship Agreement

(NB: Procedures are developed as part of school management. The Board of Trustees will be informed of the development or revision of procedures derived from Board policies by the Principal. For some especially significant procedures, these will be presented to the Board in full)