

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### PURPOSE

The School recognises that the use of technology forms a useful part of contemporary teaching and learning practice. The use of these technologies by employees to engage, collaborate, learn and share information is considered by the School to be appropriate in the context of the School's work and communication with its community.

This policy has been developed to provide guidance to employees who participate in online social media activities (however described) where this is not directly related to the fulfilment of their role. The scope of this policy extends to the Principal, School Executive, senior management and all permanent, fixed term and casual employees employed at Tintern Grammar. It also extends to contractors working at Tintern Grammar.

This Policy must be complied with at all times. Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment or engagement. Serious cases may result in legal proceedings or referral to appropriate authorities.

The School aims to foster an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that the actions of and information provided by employees is a reflection on the School.

### COMMENCEMENT AND VARIATION

This policy commences operation on **1 November 2013** and replaces all previous Social Media policies of the School. This policy is subject to variation by Tintern Grammar from time to time. Amended policies will be communicated to all employees.

### DEFINITIONS

Social Networking is the use of Social Media applications such as:

- social networking sites that allow users to build online profiles and share content with other profiles to which they choose to be linked (including but not limited to Twitter, Instagram and Facebook);
- Content sharing sites that host and distribute user-created or user-uploaded multimedia content (including but not limited to YouTube, Flickr, wikis and blogs);
- Any site that allows for public comments (including but not limited to news websites, Facebook and blogs)
- Any other digital domain

### MONITORING

- The School may, where it considers appropriate, monitor social media use and use and disclose information obtained from social media in such manner as it considers appropriate.
- Staff members must not use the School's computer system to access social media unless the access is for teaching, pastoral care or educational purposes and the staff member has the permission of the Principal in writing.
- Staff members who have permission to use social media must be apolitical, impartial and professional and avoid any statements that might be interpreted as advocating government policies or criticising the policies of political parties or groups.

## PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

- Staff members may also be held accountable for any social media use both within and outside the School, on School-owned or private equipment, where the School may be recognised and its name brought into disrepute.
- Staff should not post anything that is contrary to the best interests of the School or which may damage the School's reputation;
- Staff cannot use social media to communicate with current students of the School unless it is for education or teaching purposes and the staff member has the permission of the Principal in writing. For example, staff members must not add or accept a current student as a "friend" on Facebook. Staff members are advised to use professional discretion before accepting ex-students or parents of current students as "friends" or "followers" on social media;
- Staff should not use social media during work in a manner which detracts from their performance.

### Interaction with Students

The VIT Code of Conduct states that;

*'Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their School, whether at School or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with student'*

The Code states that

#### Principle 1.5

*a professional relationship will be violated if a Teacher...';*

*In part (d) – 'holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a student via written or electronic means*

*including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context';*

#### Principle 2.1

The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as a whole. It is expected that teachers will:

- a) Be positive role models at school and in the community;
- b) Ensure that their personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties;
- c) Act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues.

The School has adopted these principles outlined in the Victorian Institute of Teaching Profession Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct in relation to an employee's interactions with students over social networking sites, email, text messages, letters, telephone etc.

These guidelines describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community.

The School considers that the principles are also appropriate for all employees including support staff as all employees interact with students from time to time and are important members of

# TINTERN GRAMMAR

the School Community. All employees should consider that these principles apply to them unless otherwise advised.

## **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

All employees are responsible for:

- reading and being familiar with the policy; and
- conducting themselves in an appropriate manner at all times in adherence to this policy.

## **PRINCIPAL & SCHOOL EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Principal and the School Executive has responsibility to:

- ensure all employees are aware of the policy;
- intervene promptly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate electronic communication usage; and
- enact this policy in a fair and just manner across the school.

## **SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

Tintern Grammar has a responsibility to:

- ensure that all employees have access to and understand the policy;
- conduct regular awareness raising sessions with employees regarding the policy;
- ensure that the policy is fairly and justly applied across Tintern Grammar;
- respond to the needs of a particular individual as appropriate within the values of Tintern Grammar; and
- comply with legislated requirements.

## **APPROVAL**

Policy Approved By: Tintern Grammar Executive

Date Approved: 1 November 2013

Revision Date: 1 November 2016