



# INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY

## Rationale

- Hillsmeade Primary School uses the Internet as a learning tool to improve **children's** learning outcomes by increasing access to worldwide information. The school embraces the benefits of technology and is committed to reducing children's exposure to cyber-risks when using the Internet, mobile phones and other electronic devices.
- Cybersafety is a major concern facing schools. This does not only affect **children** and young people. DET employees in schools are also at risk of misusing social media or being targeted by a disgruntled young person or member of the school community. This is not a new concept. As with all forms of **inappropriate behaviours** the digital world has simply opened up a new platform for it to occur.
- There are legal consequences for misuse of social media.
- Teachers and other staff in schools have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect children from risks of injury, including those that may be encountered within the online learning environment.

## Purpose

- To provide a practical guide to support staff and meet the obligations and recommended standards of behaviours set out within existing instruments, policies and guidelines when using social media tools for personal or professional purposes.
- To ensure Hillsmeade Primary School complies with DET policy and legislation in regard to social media.
- To help redress cyberbullying.
- To ensure the school has in place strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2 and 6.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

## Definitions

In the context of DET's Using Social Media *Guide*, social media is the term used for internet based tools for sharing and discussing information among people. Additional social media tools may include (although are not limited to):

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace)
- Video and photo sharing web sites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube)
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- Micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter)
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool)
- Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Vod and podcasts
- Video conferences and web conferences
- e-mail and instant messaging

Social media also includes all other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

**Bullying** is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upsets or hurts another person or

damages their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

**Cyberbullying** is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

### Implementation

- This school **has zero tolerance of bullying** in any form.
- The wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority.
- This policy applies to all staff, teaching and non-teaching at Hillsmeade Primary School. It includes all volunteers, visitors and contractors engaged by the school and the School Council.
- The school will work towards becoming eSmart, the initiative of the Alannah and Madeline Foundation.
- Hillsmeade Primary School uses Using Social Media: Guide for DET Employees in Schools as the reference for internet use at the school.
- In consultation with staff, parents/carers and children, the school will determine what is appropriate and what is not appropriate use of social media.
- The school will assist parents/carers to support their children in the digital world by providing them with useful information about existing and emerging technologies, engaging them in the development and review of policies and inviting them to information sessions or distributing handouts on school expectations of acceptable use.
- Parents/carers, teachers, children and the community will be made aware of types of cyber bullying and its legal and hurtful ramifications. Teachers will be regularly reminded of their duty of care regarding protection of children from all forms of bullying.
- The school will use DET's Step by Step Guide: Online Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour Affecting Students in dealing with inappropriate incidents.
- The school will develop an Acceptable Use Agreement for children.
- The school will seek children's and parent/carer permission when publishing children's images and/or their work.
- Please refer also to the school's *Student Engagement Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy*, *Mobile Phones, Use by Children Policy*, *Photographing & Filming Children Policy*, the *Bullying & Harassment Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

### Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update late February 2014).

This policy was ratified by School Council in .....

Reference:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/socialmedia.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/socialmedia.aspx)