

**HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Orrvale Primary School on 03 58292490 or orrvale.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

RATIONALE

At Orrvale Primary School, we recognise that social media and online communication are now a central part of everyday life. While these platforms provide valuable opportunities for connection, collaboration, and the sharing of school experiences, they also require responsible use to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and privacy of our students, staff, and school community.

This policy provides clear guidelines for staff, parents, and guardians regarding the appropriate use of social media and online communication in relation to Orrvale Primary School. It also outlines expectations around parent/guardian consent for online activities and the use of mobile phones by staff during school hours. By following this policy, we aim to maintain a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all members of our school community.

PURPOSE

- To guide the responsible use of social media and online communication by staff, parents, and community members.
- To protect the privacy, safety, and wellbeing of students, staff, and families.
- To provide clarity about consent for the use of photographs, videos, and recordings of students.
- To ensure online communication reflects the standards of behaviour expected at Orrvale Primary School and under the Department of Education (DE) policies.

Definition of Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, “social media” refers to websites, platforms, and applications that allow users to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and images, including (but not limited to):

Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Messenger, Compass, blogs, and online discussion forums.

Consent for Photographs, Videos and Recordings

- Parents/guardians provide annual consent via Compass for the use and disclosure of photographs, videos and recordings of students in three categories:
 1. **Within the school environment** (e.g., classroom displays).
 2. **Within the school community** (e.g., newsletters, Compass posts).
 3. **Beyond the school community/publicly** (e.g., social media, website, YouTube).
- Staff must check consent levels before publishing or sharing student images.
- Parents and community members must not share photos, videos, or recordings of students (other than their own child/ren) online without permission.

Staff Responsibilities

When using social media and online communication, staff must:

- **Maintain Professionalism:** Act as role models online, ensuring conduct aligns with DE standards and school values.
 - **Respect Confidentiality:** Never share student, staff, or family information online.
 - **Use Appropriate Communication Channels:** Do not use personal social media accounts to discuss sensitive school matters with parents or students. School-approved platforms (e.g., Compass, Seesaw) should be used.
 - **Manage Boundaries:** Staff must not accept friend/follow requests from current students or alumni under 18. Exercise discretion when connecting with parents online.
 - **Consider Online Presence:** Ensure personal profiles and content reflect professional standards. Content that includes offensive language, discriminatory remarks, explicit material, or promotion of alcohol/drug misuse is not acceptable.
 - **Mobile Phones:** Personal mobile phone use during instructional time or professional meetings is not permitted. Mobile phones can be used to support a variety of school functions during the school day, including marking the roll and checking information on Compass, accessing the school phone system (e.g. 3CX application), carrying while on yard duty, and supporting communication during school camps and excursions.
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Parent and Community Responsibilities

When using social media and online communication, parents and carers must:

- **Respect Privacy:** Not share confidential or sensitive information about students, staff, or other families.
 - **Seek Permission:** Gain consent before publishing photos, recordings, or videos that include other students or staff.
 - **Communicate Respectfully:** Use appropriate language and avoid posts that are offensive, defamatory, or threatening towards staff, students, or other families.
 - **Avoid Public Complaints:** Concerns or complaints should be raised directly with the school (e.g., through the Principal), not via social media.
 - **Model Positive Behaviour:** Posts and comments should support the school community and reflect respect for diverse views and backgrounds.
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Inappropriate Use

Examples of inappropriate use of social media or online communication include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment, bullying, discrimination, or vilification of any person.
- Sharing false, misleading, or defamatory information about the school or its community.
- Posting or sharing offensive, explicit, or illegal material.
- Breaching privacy or confidentiality obligations.

Any inappropriate behaviour by staff will be investigated by the Principal and may be referred to the DE Conduct and Ethics branch. Parent breaches will be addressed in line with the school's complaints and conduct policies.

Complaints and Issues

If a staff member, parent, or community member has a concern related to social media or online communication, they should:

- Raise the concern directly with the Principal or leadership team.
 - Follow the school's **Complaints Policy and Procedures**.
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Review and Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed every **two years** or earlier if required.
 - Last ratified by School Council: **2025**
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Related Policies and Resources

- ICT User Agreement
- Digital Learning Policy
- School Complaints Policy
- Australian Professional standards for teachers
- DE Professional Codes of Conduct
- eSafety Commissioner Resources
- Victorian Teaching Profession's code of conduct

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2025
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2027