



### Appropriate use of social media policy

WEB

Version 1.0 20200512

This policy provides an overview of Gladstone State High School's management of appropriate use of social media. *When managing inappropriate online behaviours or reputation management incidents, the primary concern must be the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff members involved.*

**This policy is applicable for students while in school uniform or representing the school on approved school activities.**

#### Use of social media

Gladstone State High School embraces the opportunities that technology and the internet provide to students for learning, being creative and socialising online. Use of online communication and social media sites and apps can provide positive social development experiences through an opportunity to develop friendships and shape identities.

When used safely, social media sites and apps can provide positive opportunities for social learning and development. However, inappropriate or misguided use can lead to negative outcomes for the user and others.

Gladstone State High School is committed to promoting the responsible and positive use of social media sites and apps.

No student of Gladstone State High School will face disciplinary action for simply having an account on Facebook or other social media site.

As is set out in this document, Gladstone State High School's Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Incidents of Bullying (including Cyberbullying), Harassment or Victimisation, it is unacceptable for students to bully, harass or victimise another person whether within Gladstone State High School's grounds or while online. Inappropriate online behaviours can have a negative impact on student learning and the good order and management of Gladstone State High School – whether those behaviours occur during or outside school hours.

This policy reflects the importance of students at Gladstone State High School engaging in appropriate online behaviour.

#### Role of social media

- The majority of young people use social media sites and apps on a daily basis for school work, entertainment and to keep in contact with friends. Unfortunately, some young people misuse social media technologies and engage in cyberbullying.
- Social media by its nature will result in the disclosure and sharing of personal information. By signing up for a social media account, users are providing their personal information.
- Students need to remember that the internet is a free space and many social media sites and apps have limited restrictions placed upon allowable content and regulated procedures for the removal of concerning posts.
- Social media sites and apps are designed to share online content widely and rapidly. Once students place information and/or pictures online, they have little to no control over how that content is used.
- The internet reaches a global audience. Even if students think that comments or photos have been deleted, there can be archived records of the material that will continue to be searchable into the future.
- Inappropriate online behaviour has the potential to embarrass and affect students, others and the school for years to come.

#### Appropriate use of social media

- Students of Gladstone State High School are expected to engage in the appropriate use of social media. Specific examples of appropriate use of social media sites and apps include:

- Ensure that personal information, such as name/nickname, address, phone number, school name and location or anyone else's personal information, is not shared (including images, photos or other identification factors).
- Think about what is posted online, and how it could be interpreted – avoid posting content that would be inappropriate to display in a crowded room, or in front of influential people. Once content is posted online, control is lost.
- Avoid provoking or engaging with another user who is displaying inappropriate or abusive behaviour. Rather than responding, address cyberbullying concerns using the online reporting tools, and seek support from an adult.
- If inappropriate online behaviour directly and negatively impacts on the good order and management of Gladstone State High School, the school may impose disciplinary consequences for that behaviour regardless of whether the behaviour occurs during or outside of school hours.
- Disciplinary consequences could include suspension and/or exclusion. In serious cases of inappropriate online behaviour, the school may also make a report to the police for further investigation.
- Gladstone State High School will not become involved in concerns of cyberbullying or inappropriate online behaviour where the incident in question does not directly negatively impact upon the good order and management of the school. For example, where cyberbullying occurs between a student of this school and a student of another school outside school hours. Such an incident will be a matter for parents and/or police to resolve.

### **Laws and consequences of inappropriate online behaviour and cyberbullying**

Inappropriate online behaviour may in certain circumstances constitute a criminal offence. Both the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) and the Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) contain relevant provisions prohibiting types of online behaviour. The Commonwealth Criminal Code outlines a number of criminal offences concerning telecommunications services. Potential relevant criminal offences are:

- using a carriage service to make a threat to kill or to cause serious harm to another person
- using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence to another person
- using a carriage service for child pornography material or child abuse material
- using a carriage service to promote methods for suicide or counsel another to commit suicide.

The Queensland Criminal Code contains several applicable sections for cyberbullying. Potential relevant criminal offences are:

- unlawful stalking
- computer hacking and misuse
- possession, distribution and making child exploitation material
- fraud - obtaining or dealing with identification information
- criminal defamation.

There are significant penalties for these offences.

Gladstone State High School strives to create positive environments for all students at all times of the day, including while online. To help in achieving this goal, Gladstone State High School expects its students to engage in positive online behaviours.

### **What is inappropriate use of social media?**

Inappropriate use of social media includes:

- Cyberbullying
- Sexting and child exploitation material, child pornography and child abuse material
- Staff reputation management issues
- Other forms of inappropriate online behaviour.

### **Cybersafety**

Cybersafety refers to online behaviour that is safe, appropriate and responsible. To help prevent cybersafety incidents, students are taught how to:

- use technology appropriately and responsibly
- behave in ways to enhance their own safety.

## Ethical standards

If online behaviour raises allegations of suspected corrupt conduct by an employee report using iRefer which is the department's online reporting tool and/or email Ethical Standards Unit on [ethicalstandards@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:ethicalstandards@qed.qld.gov.au). If the online behaviours relate to alleged student harm report the allegations using an SP3 on iRefer. For further information refer to the Allegations against Employees in the Area of Student Protection procedure or contact the department's Ethical Standards Unit for further assistance.

## How is inappropriate use of social media reported at Gladstone SHS?

There are two methods available to the school community to report harm:

- Stymie – an anonymous online platform available 24 hours a day. NOTE: Stymie Reports will be forwarded to the relevant person between the hours of 6am and 5pm Monday to Friday of each school day. Stymie notifications will be suspended from 5pm on the last school day of the term and will be reactivated at 6am on the first day of the new school term.
- *Bullying and Harassment Report* form – available from the Year Coordinator staffroom, the PBC and the student counter in Administration.

## Types of inappropriate online behaviours on social media, mobile devices, and electronic technology

Examples of social media and electronic communication technology incidents which may negatively impact on the good order and management of the school include:

- Creating imposter accounts of other students and teachers on social media apps, websites or online gaming platforms.
- Student A creates a social media account in the name of Student B. Student A uses this account to impersonate Student B and send harassing messages to other students.
- Sexting: possessing, taking, distributing or posting nude or explicit images or video of yourself or another student/person, coercing or pressuring another student to take, distribute nude or explicit images or video of themselves.
- Student A asks Student B to take a photo of themselves naked. Student B takes the photo and sends it to Student A. Student A then shares the image of Student B throughout the school.
- Creating meme, gossip or hate pages about a school on social media apps or websites where the online presence is used to target students and staff members of that school.
- A group of students create a social media account for other students of their school to post offensive and mean 'gossip' about other students.
- Violent and dangerous videos: filming, sharing device-to-device or distributing online content, which involves students, involved in violent acts.
- Two students get into a fight during lunch time. A number of students film the fight and start sharing it on social media.
- Dangerous or risky behaviours which involve choking, asphyxiation or other activities dangerous to a student's health and wellbeing.
- Cyber abuse or cyberbullying: online behaviour which is reasonably likely to have a seriously threatening, intimidating, harassing or humiliating effect on a person. This behaviour may occur on various online spaces such as social media websites/apps, school email or online gaming platforms.
- Student A posts a bullying comment on Student B's photo they recently uploaded on social media. Student B deletes the comment but Student A continues to send harassing comments on social media directed at Student B.
- Taking photos or filming or voice recording a staff member or other student without consent and sharing the image or video online.
- A group of students film their English teacher during class without consent. The students then share this video on social media and write harassing comments about the teacher who is in the video.

## Information for Parents:

To help keep your child safe when they are online, you can:

- put computers in open spaces within your home
- remind your child that content can be posted instantaneously, the downfall is that they can potentially post something without thinking about the ramifications.
- educate your child about [appropriate online behaviour](#) and the need for respectful communication with other internet users

- keep an eye on what your child is doing online (both in the home and on any mobile devices they may have access to e.g. phones, music devices and tablets)
- set clear rules about what sites and activities they are allowed to access
- install software to limit their use and monitor/restrict the sites they visit
- discuss a plan with your child about how to address any cybersafety issues that may arise (make sure they know you will be supportive if they mention anything and that they will not get in trouble)
- encourage them to find someone they feel safe talking to, such as yourself, a relative, a teacher or a trusted adult.

Access [Online awareness: Information for parents and caregivers \(PDF, 4.5MB\)](#) which provides important information for parents about cybersafety and cyberbullying. It suggests what parents and caregivers could do if their child is the target of, or is responsible for, inappropriate online behaviour.

The [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#) also provide a suite of resources, helping Australians to have safer, more positive experiences online. In particular, there is a [parent page](#) which provides advice for parents and carers, along with a [blogposts page](#) which currently contains information about staying safe online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Information for students:

The 7 steps to a positive digital footprint

1. **Google yourself**—Check your name and online usernames to make sure you're happy with what is out there. If you find any negative content, delete it or report to the website where it is hosted. If you find an old social media account, take steps to remove it. If you have lost access to these accounts, contact the social media provider and request it be deleted.
2. **Privacy overhaul**—Stay on top of your privacy settings, social media platforms change these frequently. Set accounts to 'private' or 'friends only' to limit who sees your stuff. The less people who see it, the less chance there is for something to go wrong.
3. **Un-tag yourself**—Have you been tagged in an embarrassing photo or video? Ask the person to delete it. If they won't, report the post and un-tag it yourself. Never share or tag photos and videos of others without their permission.
4. **Unfriend/unfollow** - Have you added a 'random'? If you don't know and trust them in your real world, delete or block them. Don't be fooled by fake profiles or mutual friend suggestions. Unfriend your randoms today!
5. **Make positive choices** - Stay in control of your online world. If you make poor choices while on social media or online games there may be social or legal consequences. Remember, anything can be screen captured. Keep your online interactions positive, useful and true.
6. **Build your brand**—What you say and post could affect your future. Use the power of social media to brand yourself and connect to professional networks. Share your achievements, talents and passions online. Your social media accounts should portray you in a positive way.
7. **Remember...** Treat others the way you would like to be treated. If you or a friend are experiencing a difficult time online, reach out for some offline support.

### Sources:

Online incident management guidelines for school leaders (Department of Education)

eSafety education: A Guide to dealing with the sharing of explicit material at your school (eSafety commissioner)

### Resources:

- <https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/EducationDelivery/educationandict/cybersafetyandreputationmanagement/Pages/default.aspx>
- [eSafety's Parents page](#)—learn about what children do online and how you can encourage them to be positive digital citizens at different ages.
- [Stay Smart Online](#)—read about how to protect personal and financial information.
- [ThinkUKnow Parents Portal](#)—contains information about technologies that are popular with kids and advice about app safety.
- [Computers and your child](#)—learn how you can help your children to stay safe online, and set boundaries for how to use technology.
- [Who's chatting to your kids?](#)—provides tips to help you keep your children safe from online predators.
- [Bullying. No way!](#)—information about bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence in schools.
- [Social media and the school community \(PDF, 1.5MB\)](#)—a guide offering information to parents and caregivers about how to use social media in relation to comments or posts about their school community.