Richmond High School Social media policy

This policy has been developed to provide school staff with standards of use as they engage in conversations or interactions using digital media for official, professional and personal use.

Richmond High staff manage and monitor 3 principal official social media sites:

Facebook  http://www.facebook.com/richmondhighschool

Twitter  http://twitter.com/richmondhs

Youtube  http://www.youtube.com/user/RichmondHSNSW

All sites are linked to the school website at:

http://www.richmond-h.schools.nsw.edu.au

These staff are members of the school's eLearning or Technology Team and have the task of maintaining communication media to achieve community penetration in the Hawkesbury and beyond:

Mr Gordon (monitor), Ms L. Garcia (content).

Objectives - Policy statement

- The school supports staff participation in social media online applications such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites and message boards that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content.

- Social media provides an opportunity to:
  - engage and interact with our various audiences
  - promote staff expertise.

- The following five standards apply to employees' work use and personal use of social media at any time, when it has a clear and close connection with the department. The department will enforce these five standards as and when appropriate:
  - Always follow relevant department policies including the Code of Conduct.
  - Do not act unlawfully (such as breaching copyright) when using social media.
  - Make sure your personal online activities do not interfere with the performance of your job.
  - Be clear that your personal views are yours, and not necessarily the views of the department.
  - Do not disclose confidential information obtained through work.

Staff within the school have a great deal of experience across a range of education and public policy areas. These voices should be encouraged to engage in the conversations that are taking place every day in public forums made more accessible through online social media.

Social media is a group of online applications such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites, and message boards that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content.

Conversations in social media are a dialogue, an opportunity to listen, share, collaborate and respond to our colleagues and communities.

Richmond High School staff, students and community recognize the importance of participating in these conversations. Because the social media space is relatively new, and comments may be public and potentially permanent, we’ve developed these guidelines to support staff as they engage in any conversations or interactions using digital media for official, professional and personal use.
The guidelines promote responsible use and can be summarised as:

- Know and follow relevant department policies including the **Code of Conduct**
- Be honest
- Be polite and considerate
- Use common sense
- Be apolitical and impartial when using social media for official and professional use
- Demonstrate NSW public education values (fairness, respect, integrity and responsibility).

These guidelines also provide direction for establishing official department social media networks, blogs, microblogs, message boards or image and video sharing sites.

For a more detailed understanding of social media please refer to the [online social media and technology guide for staff](DEC intranet only). The DEC provides an accredited Facebook course for educators, answers to frequently asked real-life scenarios, videos explaining how certain social media sites work and more.

- You will also find the **communication planning and management section** (intranet only) helpful to better understand the benefits, management, monitoring and measurement of social media before including it as part of your communication strategy.
The NSW Department of Education & Training’s Social Media Rules of Engagement

1. Know and follow relevant department policies including the Code of Conduct.
   - What you produce can ultimately have consequences for you.
   - Failure to abide by these guidelines and the Code of Conduct could put you at risk.
   - Please also follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites.

2. Be aware when you mix your work and personal lives – the general public consider us ‘the voice’ of the department 24/7. Represent us well.
   - The lines between your personal and professional lives are blurred in online social networks; as are what might be considered ‘public’ versus ‘private’ boundaries.
   - Your role with the department creates an association between what you say online and the department itself.
   - Represent us well and be sure that the content you publish is consistent with your work.

3. Be transparent and identify yourself when discussing department-related topics or issues - use your real name, tell people you work for us and be clear that you are giving your personal opinion.
   - If you are publishing content related to your work, identify that you are a department employee.
   - If your comments are not made on an official department social media account, be clear it’s your personal opinion.
   - As an identified department employee, your comments should be apolitical, impartial and professional.

4. Consider what you say before you say it – it’ll be on the web for a long time!
   - If you’re uncertain about something, don’t publish!
   - It will be around for a long time so make sure it’s correct before you post and seek advice if in doubt.
   - Remember whatever you publish on your personal account is yours and can have consequences for you personally.
   - Don’t forget to check your spelling and grammar – your professional credibility is inextricably linked to your online comments.

5. Be original and respect copyright.
   - It is critical that you show the proper respect for copyright laws and fair use of copyrighted materials owned by others, including user-generated content.
   - Acknowledge your source – it’s also good practice to link to other people’s work.
6. Use discretion. Take care not to publish information that should not be made public. If you aren’t 100% sure, seek advice.

- In your efforts to be transparent, you need to take care not to publish information that should not be made public.
- If you are not responsible for the information, ask permission to publish content that isn’t already in the public domain.
- Avoid discussion of industrial or legal issues, and refer these to the relevant directorates if asked to comment specifically.
- Content published on the internet is widely accessible and is public for a long time.
- If you are in doubt about whether information can be made public, seek advice.

7. Play fair; be polite, be considerate – don’t pick fights or engage in them, remember what you say will be public for a long time.

- Don’t be afraid to be yourself but do so respectfully.
- Adopt a polite and considerate tone and avoid crossing the line from healthy debate into attack.
- Be sure to make it clear that your views and opinions do not necessarily represent the official views of the department.

8. Stick to your area of expertise and talk about what you know.

- Whenever possible make sure you produce content about your areas of expertise, as they relate to the activities of the department.
- If you are responding to a question that falls outside your area of expertise, state that it isn’t your area of expertise and that you’ll follow up
- Seek advice from the appropriate area within the department

9. It’s a conversation so be human - use your own voice and bring your personality into the conversation. It makes it more interesting!

- Share your thoughts and opinions in a personable way.
- Listen to what people are saying, avoid ‘lecturing’, and produce content that’s open-ended and invites response.
- Actively encourage people to submit comments.
- Be plain-speaking, informal but respectful, empathetic, friendly, positive, concise and honest.

10. Admit your mistakes – we all make them so when you do, be quick to admit and correct them.

- We all make mistakes. So when you make a mistake, be quick to admit and correct it.
- If you are correcting a mistake do so, but indicate the change you’ve made.
- If it is more serious and could lead to legal action, contact legal services for advice.

11. Make sure your personal online activities don’t interfere with your job performance.

- Be mindful of personal time spent on social media at work.
• Used well, social media provides excellent opportunities for professional networking, ideas exchange and customer feedback.

12. If it’s official department communication, be dedicated, be constant – get permission, listen, plan, contribute regularly and keep listening.

• If you decide it’s appropriate to use social media for official department communication, you need to get permission from the senior manager in your area first, then ensure appropriate approvals.

• Make sure it is part of an overall communication plan, listen to what people are saying and have someone champion the account to keep the conversation going.

• An unintended conversation can send the wrong message, so if you don’t have the resources to maintain it, don’t do it.

• Refer to the communication planning and management section (DEC intranet only) to make the best use of this communication opportunity.

**Official department social media accounts**

Official department social media accounts need to be approved by a director, school principal or by people delegated by their institute director.

All official accounts must be registered with the director, corporate communication and activity will be reported through to the executive. (Just drop a brief email to corporatecommunication@det.nsw.edu.au). Department accounts may be listed and cross-promoted on other department platforms.)

Adhere to the department’s social media policy and guidelines.

Please refer to the DEC communication planning and management section (intranet only) to make the best use of social media as a communication ‘channel’. It includes how to set up listening posts, planning, monitoring, measuring effectiveness and activating communities.

Personal accounts may not be listed or cross-promoted on department platforms unless approved by the director, corporate communication.

**What is an official account?**

Official accounts represent the DEC, and are approved as above.