

Social Media & Your School



Be a positive role model by demonstrating respectful and responsible behaviours when communicating with and about your child's school online.

Times have changed

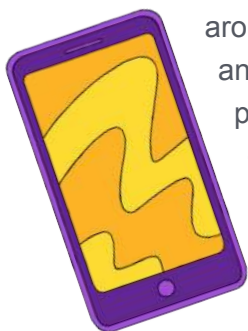
A few years ago parents discussed concerns or issues with friends at the school gate. Today, with the internet, mobile phones and social media, discussions between you and your friends can reach a far wider audience than ever before.

Social media can provide an enjoyable way to socialise online and keep you connected with what is going on in your school community.

While these technologies can be great for sharing ideas and keeping in touch, don't forget that comments about your school community can have greater impact than expected and can have very real consequences for the reputations of individuals including teachers, principals, other parents, students and yourself.

As a parent and carer, you are your child's first role model when it comes to online behaviour. Make sure your online conduct demonstrates how they can use social media respectfully and safely.

There are also legal implications around what people are able to post and share about others. The idea of privacy in the online world can be confusing but essentially posting or sharing personal information about another person online requires consent.



Top tips for positive and respectful online communication with your school community

Avoid posting negative comments that identify your school or individuals.

Feedback from the school community is important for schools and the department. Each Victorian Government school has a complaints process for raising concerns. If you have a concern, rather than go online, speak directly to your child's teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal.

If after having this conversation you feel that your concerns have not been resolved, you can contact the **Community Liaison Officer** at your closest Department of Education and Training Regional Office, who will assist you and the school to find a solution. For more information on raising a concern or issue with your child's school see:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

Remember: serious instances of inappropriate online behavior may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. School staff may obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation.

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Try not to be emotive or hasty.
Keep comments calm and polite.

Before you post something online about your child's school ask yourself:

- Am I being a good role model for my child?
- Will this information reflect badly on me?
- Does the school community or individual really need to know this information?
- Is this information relevant, helpful and positive?
- Will this information upset or embarrass the school community or an individual?
- Am I making situation worse?

If things do get heated online consider logging out and taking time to relax.



Be aware of what you are sharing
and with whom.

Remember that the legal implications around sharing personal information applies to images and video presented online.

As the parent/carer of your child, you have the right to choose who sees your child's personal information, including their image online. You also have a responsibility to **not share** the personal details of other children.

If you upload photos on social media of school events, be aware of who is in the background. Some parents and caregivers do not want themselves or their children on social media. It is recommended that you never tag a child's image with any personal information.

If your child's personal information or image has been shared on social media without your consent you can request its removal by the social network hosting it.

All Victorian Government schools have a policy on if and when it is appropriate to use cameras for filming or photographing school events. You can contact your child's school for more information.

If you share pictures of your children publicly through online photo-sharing sites and hashtags, remember that once it is shared, you have no control over how it is used or by whom. To avoid these photos being shared by others or used for purposes without your consent, make sure you set up your account security settings to share images only with close family and friends.



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Get to know social media.

It may be helpful to research online networks and mobile applications. In particular look at:

- Terms of Use
- Policies and procedures for the removal of content
- Privacy settings

Be proactive.

If you see something you feel should be removed, flag it. Some sites will allow you to do this anonymously.

Address inappropriate content.

If you encounter inappropriate content online, there are a number of steps you can take:

- Refrain from responding.
- Take a screen capture or print a copy of the concerning online content.
- If you think the content is explicit, pornographic or exploitative of minors, contact the eSafety Commission <https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting>
- Block the offending user.
- If the inappropriate or negative comments are in regards to your child's school or members of the school community you should also contact the school Principal.
- Report the content to the social media provider (e.g. Facebook). Providers can remove content that contravenes their Terms of Use.



How do I report inappropriate content?

Most website have a '**report/block this person**' or '**report/block this content**' function. Links to report or block users can be found below:

Facebook

www.facebook.com/safety

Instagram

help.instagram.com

Google (including YouTube)

google.com/support/go/legal

Tumblr

www.tumblr.com/help

Twitter

support.twitter.com

eSafety Commissioner

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting>

Further information

eSafety Commissioner

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

Bully Stoppers

www.education.vic.gov.au/bullystoppers