

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

---

**This policy provides guidance and advice to employees, volunteers, parents and families associated with the Geelong Kindergarten Association (GKA) around using and managing social media.**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and advice around how to manage and use social media in an early childhood education and development setting.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **1. VALUES**

This policy aims to establish guidelines by which GKA's social media interactions can be managed with the best interests of GKA's brand and reputation in mind.

GKA values the benefits of social media as an effective tool for communication and relationship building with community and stakeholders.

It is crucial that representatives of GKA use social media to champion GKA and its services.

#### **2. SCOPE**

The information outlined in this policy applies to all GKA Staff, Volunteers, Students, Parents and Families of children associated with GKA kindergartens.

#### **3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION**

##### **Background**

GKA is developing an increasing presence across a range of media channels. These channels provide a useful tool in assisting with communication and promotion.

Predominately, social media is being used by GKA employees in order to provide information and updates to families. GKA encourages its services to use social media as a tool to communicate details of events, programs, and projects.

##### **Legislation and standards**

Legislation relevant to this policy includes:

- Information Privacy Act (2000) Vic
- Equal Opportunity Act (2010) Vic
- Education and Care Services National Law Act
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Child Safe Standards

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Social media refers to a range of on-line services and tools used for sharing, publishing and discussing information, along with promoting, interaction and dialogues, opinion and other content, across open networks.

Social media may include (but is not limited to):

- Networking sites (such as MySpace, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Yammer, Edmodo, Bebo)
- Photo, video, and audio sharing websites (such as YouTube, Sound Cloud, iTunes, Flickr, Vimeo)
- Instant messaging (such as SMS)
- Podcasting and Vod
- On-line collaborations and wikis (such as Wikipedia)
- Discussion boards, Message boards, Groups and Forums (such as Whirlpool, Google Moderator, Power Boards)
- Gaming Platforms (such as Second Life)
- Geo-spatial tagging
- Blogs (Personal, corporate or those hosted by other media outlets)
- Micro-blogs and micro-forums (such as Twitter)

## 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- Information Privacy Act (2000) Vic
- Equal Opportunity Act (2010) Vic

### Service policies

- Code of Conduct
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Child Safe Policy

## PROCEDURES

### Official Use

Official use is when an employee or volunteer is using social media as a representative of GKA with permission from GKA Management. Educators will require formal permission from their Kindergarten Services Manager, to represent their particular service. Educators will have a responsibility to ensure that their social media is maintained, and that best practice is in place. GKA Central Support staff will require permission from the Managing Director, to represent GKA through GKA's accounts. All GKA staff must ensure that they operate within guidelines outlined in GKA's Child Safe, Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy.

### GKA Facebook Page

A closed Facebook page will be established for staff only and administrated by GKA Central Support for the purposes of staff sharing ideas and information. GKA staff are encouraged to engage in social media to enhance professional learning and practice however they must adhere to guidance about its use to ensure the benefits of social media are maximised, while protecting GKA's public reputation and that of its employees and the privacy of the children and their families using GKA services. It's important to maintain a balance between encouraging discussion and information sharing and

maintaining a professional and appropriate online/public presence. When exchanging opinions staff must identify this as an opinion and refrain from criticising or arguing with the opinion of colleagues.

Staff may post fun or personal-interest messages on the GKA Staff Facebook page and staff are encouraged to contribute to discussions and share information. Please also consider:

- Staff use of the GKA Facebook page must not interfere with the performance of work duties
- Staff should be mindful that posts may be read by people from a variety of backgrounds who may not share the same sense of humor, and
- Staff must not use social media to publicly complain about their employment, as the appropriate process for resolving such complaints are through discussions with the Manager, or via GKAs internal dispute or complaints resolution mechanisms.

## **Personal Use**

Personal use is when an employee, volunteer, or parent is using social media as themselves, not officially representing GKA as an organisation, but identifying themselves as being associated with GKA on their own profiles, posts, blogs, etc. Posts of this nature must also comply with the guidelines outlined in GKA's Child Safe, Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy.

## **Guidelines**

As a guide, the following principles should be followed when interacting on social media:

- Do not criticise colleagues, children, parents or families associated with GKA
- Do not talk on behalf of the organisation only on behalf of the individual
- Do not do anything that will breach GKA's terms of employment or the Code of Conduct
- Do not post inaccurate information
- Do not post identifying photographs or details of children
- Remove any inappropriate or abusive content / posts immediately
- Only post information which can be publicly obtained. Do not discuss internal workings or any GKA business which is not public knowledge
- Behave respectfully and politely
- Do not post material that is offensive, defamatory, obscene, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, racist, sexist, breaches a court order, or is unlawful or links to such content
- Do not breach confidentiality, for example by revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by GKA or confidential information about an individual (such as a child, family or colleague ) or organisation
- Do not post anything that infringes copy right or GKA policy
- Do not bring GKA into disrepute by criticising or arguing with colleagues, partners or other agencies, or by making defamatory comments about GKA, other individuals or other organisations, or groups
- Do not fail to provide appropriate acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce an image or article.

To ensure GKA complies with Child Safe Standards, GKA Staff must:

- Not accept invitations to connect with clients on their personal social media accounts
- Not use their personal social media accounts to communicate with children or young people who are clients of GKA

- Respect professional boundaries and ensure their behaviour is in line with GKAs Child Safe Policy when communicating with children and young people.

### **Policy Breach**

Misuse of social media can have serious consequences for GKA, and consequently that misuse can have serious consequences for staff and associates of GKA.

Non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of contract of employment, misconduct, harassment, discrimination or defamation.

Staff or volunteers should contact GKA Central Support if:

- they are not sure if they should get involved in social media commentary or participate in an online discussion
- they are worried about their privacy or reputation as a result of social media posts or
- they find information online you reasonably believe GKA needs to know about, this includes inappropriate activity on social media by other staff or volunteers.

### **EVALUATION**

GKA will actively monitor and review this policy, in order to ensure that it remains effective and compliant under current legislation and best practice.

GKA will ensure that it will observe changes and trends around social media, and revise this policy in order to remain relevant and up to date.

This policy was adopted by GKA on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

Last Reviewed 1 June 2017

Review Date 1 June 2018