

Social Media

[Social Media and the School Community.pdf](#)

**Interested in starting a Facebook group for your school class, reunion or parent group?
Maybe you have already started a page involving the parents within your child's school.**

While Facebook groups can be a great platform to share and keep up to date with news, activities and events happening at your school, it's important to remember that many schools have an official Facebook page – and anything you create is not a school-run page.

The Queensland Department of Education and Training has put together the following 10 basic tips and strategies for parents planning on creating and administrating these types of Facebook pages.

Tell your school!

You should always talk to the principal of your school if you're planning on creating a Facebook page. They may have some suggestions on how to set it up properly, or might advise you that they already have an official Facebook page. The school may not wish to support a Facebook group being created, in consideration of the best interests of the school community, and to avoid confusion between this new page and their official online presence(s). It is advised that a short statement is posted on the page you are creating, stating that it is not the official Facebook page of the school, and therefore the page is not endorsed by the school.

What to name the group?

When it comes to naming your group, it is best to stay away from exclusively using the school's name, as this may cause confusion within the school community. You should also make the purpose of the group clear, whether it is a group for the parents and guardians of students, past students, or a grade specific group, for example, 'Coorparoo SS Parents and Guardians school info Group'. It is also important to avoid using the school logo as the profile picture for the group.

Who will be the admins?

When first creating a group it is advised to have one administrator. As your group grows, your page may require more attention so you may decide to add more admins to the group. Keep in mind that once you make a group member an admin, they will be able to add or remove group members or admins, and edit the group description and settings. You should only add a member as an admin if you know and trust them.

Be vigilant and monitor your page

If you encounter negative, derogatory or inappropriate content being posted on your page, taking the following steps will help to resolve the issue quickly and efficiently.

- Refrain from responding
- Take a screen shot or print a copy of the concerning content
- Block the offending user from the group
- Report the content to Facebook
- Delete the concerning content from the page.

Keep the page Positive!

Before you post something online, ask yourself if the community or school really need to know this. Is it relevant? Helpful? And Positive? Remember the aim of a school Facebook group is to connect people and share school news and upcoming event information. Be a good role model online.

Avoid naming staff and students

It is important to be mindful of the privacy of staff and students who attend the school. Some members of the community may not wish to have the whereabouts of themselves or their children visible online. By naming staff and students, you could be revealing this information to members of the public, and placing their safety at risk.

What photos are appropriate?

When you're posting images on the page, it is important to consider who might be in the background, and how the photo is portraying the school. You might be happy uploading and sharing a photo that pictures your child, but if the photo

contains other children it is important to check with the parent or guardian of those children before uploading the photo. The same goes for tagging and naming people in photographs, comments and status updates.

Is Facebook the best place to raise complaints?

The appropriate method of raising any concerns you have in respect of the school or its staff is to discuss the matter directly with the School's Principal. If you remain dissatisfied after talking to them you are entitled to complain to their supervisor. Raising matters of concern on social media sites will not by itself cause your concerns with the school/staff to be dealt with or responded to.

There can be consequences

Be mindful of the potential harm you may cause to the reputation and personal well-being of staff members you or your group members may mention on the page. A serious instance of inappropriate online content may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. For example, online content may substantiate the offence of 'using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence' (*Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) s.474.1*). School staff may contact their union or obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation. Defamatory content may give rise to litigation under the *Defamation Act 2005 (Qld)*.

Facebook has community standards

There are standards associated with having a group on Facebook, and it is important to ensure that all administrators of the group have read and understood Facebook's terms of service. If something is posted on your Facebook group and it is reported as breaching Facebook's community standards, the post or image may be removed or worst case the group could be disabled.

<https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms>.

Resources

<https://www.facebook.com/help/>

<http://education.qld.gov.au/student-services/behaviour/qaav/docs/social-media-and-community-online.pdf>