



# APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## NANANGO STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Nanango State High School embraces the many 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 applications (apps) can provide positive social development experiences through an opportunity to develop friendships and shape identities.

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

**Nanango State High School** is committed to and expects responsible and positive use of social media sites and apps by all members of the school community.

No student should attempt to contact or 'friend' a Nanango State High School Staff member through a social media site. It is Education Queensland policy that staff are not permitted to be friends with students on social media.

Posting and/or liking any comments or images on social media that portrays Nanango State High School, its students or its staff in a negative light can result in disciplinary (**see Pg. 9 Responsible Behaviour Plan**) and/or legal action.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term damaging effects on those involved, including bystanders and is not acceptable under any circumstance. (See Policy **Response to Bullying** and **Personal Technology Devices policy**)

Inappropriate online behaviours can have a negative impact on student learning and wellbeing as well as impacting negatively on the good order and management of **Nanango State High School**, whether those behaviours occur during or outside school hours.

### Awareness

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, like Twitter, 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 other content online, they have little or 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 and Safe use of social media

The majority of young people use social media sites and apps on a daily basis for entertainment, to keep in contact with friends and to assist with school work. Unfortunately, some young people misuse social media technologies and engage in cyberbullying.

Students of Nanango 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:

- Ensuring that personal information, such as full name, address, phone number, school name and location or anyone else's personal information, is not shared.
- Thinking about what they want to say or post, and how it could be interpreted by others, before putting it online. **Remember, once content is posted online you no longer have control over it.** Students should not post any content online that they would be uncomfortable saying or showing to their parents' face or shouting in a crowded room.
- Remembering that it can be difficult to work out whether messages typed on social media sites and apps are meant to be funny or sarcastic. Tone of voice and context is often lost which can lead to unintended consequences. If students think a message may be misinterpreted, they should be cautious and make the decision not to post it.
- Never provoking, or engaging with, another user who is displaying inappropriate or abusive behaviour. There is no need to respond to a cyberbully. Students should report cyberbullying to parents and other responsible adults

If inappropriate online behaviour impacts on the good order and management of **Nanango 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 may include suspension and/or exclusion. In serious cases of inappropriate online behaviour, the school may also make a report to QPS for further investigation.

**Nanango State High School** will not become involved in concerns of cyberbullying or inappropriate online behaviour where the incident in question does not 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 applicable to cyberbullying.

The Commonwealth Criminal Code outlines a number of criminal offences concerning telecommunications services. The most relevant offence for cyberbullying is "using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence to another person".

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

- Unlawful stalking.
- Computer hacking and misuse.
- Possession of child exploitation material.
- Involving a child in making child exploitation material.
- Making child exploitation material.
- Distribution of child exploitation material.
- Criminal Defamation.

**There are significant penalties for these offences.**