



SILVER TREE STEINER SCHOOL

Social Media Policy

2025

This policy applies to: Staff, parents, students and the wider community using social media pages affiliated with Silver Tree Steiner School.

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Introduction

Silver Tree Steiner School (STSS) acknowledges that social media and messaging platforms (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok) are widely used by members of our community. These platforms can be powerful tools for communication, collaboration, and community building. When used responsibly, they support positive engagement and help keep parents and carers informed and connected. However, their informal nature can also lead to misunderstandings, the spread of misinformation, or behaviour that may adversely impact others or the school's reputation. This policy outlines the expectations and standards for the appropriate use of social media by all members of the school community, both within and outside the school. It is grounded in the core values of trust, respect, courtesy, and individual accountability, ensuring that all communication aligns with the ethos of Silver Tree Steiner School.

Definition

Social Media - The term social media refers to a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Examples of social media networking sites includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok.

Students

It is expected that no child enrolled at Silver Tree Steiner School is active on social media. This includes having no account on Facebook, YouTube, Tiktok, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, X or other social media platforms.

The Australian Government passed the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024* in November to ban young people under the age of 16 from using certain social media platforms. The ban is expected to take effect later in 2025.

In line with our school's values and rules, the school will reach out to the parents of any student found to be active online. This ensures that parents are informed and can work with the school to address any concerns and reinforce the importance of offline, age-appropriate activities.

Related Policies

Other policies that should be read in conjunction with this policy are: Code of Conduct for Parents

- Code of Conduct for Staff, Board of Governors, Contractors and Volunteers
- Code of Conduct for Students

Rights and Responsibilities of STSS Community Members

A community can only function effectively when all members afford and treat each other with respect. Members of the school community are expected to give respect to others and the reputation and good name of the school.

This policy is not intended to discourage nor unduly limit a person's personal expression or online activities; however, potential for direct or indirect damage to be caused to others in our community or the school through inappropriate use of social media is very real. As such a person's online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that a person uses face-to-face, and be in accordance with the ethos of the school.

Social Media Conduct Expectations

- Refrain from posting or responding to content that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringing on copyright, or otherwise unlawful.
- Maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Use technology responsibly and respectfully.
- Refrain from using Social Media platforms to share negative commentary or discussion about the school or its staff.
- Ensure that your online behaviour reflects the same honesty, respect and consideration as expected in face-to-face communication.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of others. Always seek permission from other parents before posting, sharing or tagging images that include their children.
- Ensure that all content posted is accurate and not misleading.
- Reflect on how your post may impact your personal and professional character, as well as the wellbeing of others.
- Think carefully before posting.

Please refer to the *Code of Conduct for Parents* (available on our website) for more detailed guidelines.

It is important to note that even with the strictest privacy settings what is said online can still be shared more broadly. Online communication should be in keeping with the expectations outlined above. A 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with the strictest privacy settings. Therefore, all community members are responsible for their posts, regardless of privacy settings or intentions.

WhatsApp and Class Communication Groups

We understand that class WhatsApp groups and similar platforms can be helpful for parents and carers to stay connected, share reminders, and support one another. While these groups can foster a sense of community, it's important to remember that they are not monitored, managed, or endorsed by the school.

Please be mindful that these forums can unintentionally become spaces where personal views, frustrations, or concerns are shared. This can sometimes lead to misinformation, misunderstandings, and unnecessary anxiety within the school community.

It is the responsibility of all parents to maintain respectful and appropriate interactions. If any inappropriate conduct is observed, including offensive language, bullying, or the sharing of unsuitable content, it must be reported promptly to the school. A specific example of inappropriate behaviour includes parents using the group to confront one another about incidents involving their children. All incidents that occur at school should be addressed directly with the Class Teacher, Education Coordinator, or Head of School. Parents are strongly advised not to engage with or respond to inappropriate messages or behaviour within the group, but instead to bring these matters to the attention of school staff, who will manage them in accordance with school policy. This approach helps maintain a respectful and supportive environment for all community members.

Silver Tree Steiner School Facebook Pages & Groups

Silver Tree Steiner School Page

This is a public page which serves to promote school events, promote the school and publish informative articles related to Steiner Education. Notifications on this page are controlled by the *Admin* of the group (a member of the Silver Tree Administrative Staff) and Members of this group are able to like and

comment on these posts.

Friends of the Silver Tree Steiner School

This is a public group for current families and staff, prospective parents, graduates and former staff of Silver Tree Steiner School to keep in touch and to support the school. No political posts or advertising for paid services or goods are allowed unless these goods or services have a connection to fundraising at Silver Tree Steiner School or goods sold at Market – these can be posted on Market day. Current parents can advertise their businesses on the Silver Tree Businesses and Buy Swap Sell Facebook group.

Silver Tree Steiner School Businesses and Buy, Swap, Sell

This is a private group for current parents, staff and immediate family of current staff to advertise their businesses or buy, swap or sell goods or services.

Silver Tree Steiner School Individual Class Groups

Private Facebook groups have been setup and administrated by Silver Tree staff for current parents of some Primary classes to ask questions of each other, share information, arrange social gatherings, and connect. These Facebook pages are intended for informal discussions which are supportive, uplifting, and a positive connection point for Silver Tree families.

Any comments or posts on any of the above pages which are considered to be offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, threatening, violent, racist, sexist, pornographic, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful or might cause damage to the school's reputation or bring it into disrepute will be deleted and the member will be blocked from the page.

Breach of this Policy

A breach of this policy may also involve a breach of other Silver Tree Steiner School policies, such as, but not limited to:

- Code of Conduct for Parents
- Code of Conduct for Staff, Board of Governors, Contractors and Volunteers
- Professional Standards for Teachers in WA
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Values Statement

If a parent or employee comes across negative remarks about the school and/or its operations online, they are required to inform the School of these negative remarks.

Any breach of this policy will be considered by the Leadership Team as serious and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's *Concerns and Complaints Policy*. The breach will be investigated, and a course of action will be determined following the investigation.

The sanctions which may be employed include:

- A first and final warning meeting and subsequent letter being issued to inform the relevant person/s of the outcome of the investigation and that another breach of the applicable Code of Conduct will not be tolerated.
- Being removed and blocked from Silver Tree Steiner School social media Pages and Groups.
- A ban from being on the school grounds or attending any extra-curricular activity.
- A direction, in the case of a parent/guardian, that he/she may only communicate with members of staff through a specified School representative.
- A restraining order being sought against the relevant person through the legal system.

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- The school taking such other steps as it may in its reasonable discretion determine appropriate according to the nature of the breach.
- The discontinuation of their enrolment agreement with the school, effective immediately.

All reports of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated and may result in a notification to Police.

Members of Facebook pages who breach this policy will be blocked from the relevant Facebook page. Parents who breach this policy may be asked to withdraw their child from school in cases which adversely reflect on Silver Tree Steiner School.

It is important that staff, students and parents should be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has or may have been committed, they may be subjected to a criminal investigation by Police over which the school will have no control.