**CROMWELL COLLEGE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

1. **Our Commitment**

Cromwell College is committed to providing an environment for staff and students that is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying, including those due to social media use.

**2.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide:

(a) information highlighting the potential implications of using social media inappropriately

(a) guidelines for the appropriate use of social media at Cromwell College

(b) examples of inappropriate social media use and how to manage these circumstances

**3.0 Definition**

Social media refers to communication methods via digital platforms that are used to share opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives via written comments, shared images, video or audio files. Social media platforms include blogs, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Messenger, Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube.

**4.0 Scope**

Social media is an increasingly prevalent, effective and powerful method of communication and has become an integral part of modern life. Cromwell College acknowledges that its students, staff, contractors and conference guests while on-site use social media in both personal and professional capacities. The college also seeks to engage with its students, alumni and broader community through social media. With this in mind social media can blur the lines between personal and professional expression and all members of the College must carefully consider their conduct online, so as to preserve and protect their individual reputations and the reputation of the College.

When using social media the College community is responsible for following the same behavioural standards as outlined in the Students’ Code of Conduct, Student Handbook, policies published by the College and University and as outlined in both State and Federal Legislation.

**5.0 Guidelines**

In addition to the College’s behavioural expectation, as outlined in the Students’ Code of Conduct and Student Handbook, the following points provide some additional guidance with respect to the use of social media:

5.1 Be genuine, credible and respectful

5.2 *Remember no social media environment is the same*. Ensure that you are aware of and understand the distinctions and accepted communication style of each application, before you begin posting.

5.3 *Remember to post appropriately as social media content is easily spread*.

5.4 *Maintain confidentiality.* Don’t share any confidential, private or sensitive information through social media. Only provide information that is publicly available, and do not comment on or disclose any confidential or sensitive information.

5.5 *Do not use social media to harass, vilify, bully or discriminate against any individual.*

5.6 *Protect your own safety and privacy*. Before broadcasting information of your location or activities, consider your own privacy and safety. Ensure that you are aware of and understand the privacy settings you have set for social media sites that you use and set them to protect your privacy and safety.

5.7 *Be aware of liability*. What you post online is your responsibility. Post carefully and after considering your liability in doing so. Be aware that any instance of breaching copyright laws is unlawful.

5.8 *Consider how your posts might affect other people.* If you post something derogatory, negative or inflammatory about another person or group on a social media site, you need to consider the potential affect it might have especially given the whole community will be reading it. If it is something that you would not consider saying to someone personally then you should not post it.

5.9 *Think about in what capacity you are posting*. Give thought to the capacity in which you are posting and be sure to differentiate between your roles if you hold more than one. If you are acting in your personal capacity rather than your work capacity, ensure that is made clear.

5.10 *Use your online posting to promote the College and not to damage it’s reputation in any way.*

5.11 *Something posted on a social media site is a written communication,* and the same legal ramifications can result, such as breach of privacy or confidentiality, defamation or trade practices/ fair trading violations. As it is written in a permanent forum, it will always be able to be accessed and has the same evidentiary value as a more formal, hard copy communication.

**Acknowledgements**

The College acknowledges that sections of this policy have been provided, with permission, from Dunmore Lang College’s Social Media Policy, Macquarie University.

**APPENDIX**

The following information is provided by Legal Aid Queensland (accessed 12 December 2017) and is intended to provide examples of common areas and circumstances where the College’s Social Media Policy would be breached as well as some suggestions on how to manage each situation.

## Cyber bullying

### What is cyber bullying?

Cyber bullying is intentional and repeated cruel or hurtful behavior that is carried out using technology, such as:

* SMS or text messages
* email
* blogs
* chat rooms
* discussion boards
* instant messaging
* online games
* photo sharing apps, eg Snapchat and Instagram
* social networking sites and apps like Facebook, Twitter and Ask.fm.

Cyber bullying can include:

* sending cruel and threatening messages or material
* putting embarrassing photos of people on the web
* creating fake profiles that are mean or hurtful
* sending unwanted messages online, teasing and making fun of others.

A cyber bully can be someone you know or a stranger.

### Is cyber bullying illegal in Queensland?

Yes. Cyber bullying is a crime if it involves using the internet or a mobile phone to:

* **make threats**
this can include trying to intentionally frighten, intimidate or annoy someone by threatening to hurt them; it is also illegal to threaten to enter or damage a property
* **stalk someone**
stalking is when someone gets repeated attention that frightens or intimidates them
* **menace, harass or seriously offend someone**
this can include sending offensive messages or making posts that make someone feel extremely angry, outraged, humiliated or disgusted.

### How do I stop cyber bullying?

* Don’t give out your private information like passwords, names, addresses, phone numbers, school names, photos or family information online to people you don’t know or trust. This information can be used by bullies and others to harm you.
* Don’t exchange photos or give your email address to people on the internet you don’t know or trust.
* Don’t send messages when you’re angry. This can start a heated conversation that may lead to bullying.
* Don’t reply to messages from a bully. Bullies will often get bored and stop their behaviour if you don’t respond.
* Leave a chat room or instant message service immediately if you are feeling harassed.
* Block the person so they can’t contact you.
* Use caller ID blocking to hide your phone number when making calls.
* Don’t leave your name on your voicemail.
* Report the bully. You can anonymously report the bully and if the bully has breached a website’s terms and conditions their account may be disabled.
* Take a screenshot to keep as evidence of the bullying.

### What should I do if I am being cyber bullied?

#### Tell someone

Nobody should have to deal with bullying alone. Tell a trusted adult, like the Principal or Deputy Principal of the college, parent, counsellor or friend.

#### Lifeline

Phone: 13 11 14

#### Stop the activity

People who bully get their kicks from knowing they’ve upset the person they’re bullying. If you don’t let them know they’ve upset you, you will have taken away half of their fun and they are more likely to stop the activity.

## How is cyberbullying dealt with in Australia?

There are a number of criminal laws that can apply to cyberbullies and anyone above the age of 14 will be held criminally responsible.

The offence is considered cyberbullying when it involves:

1. Using the Internet or a phone in a harassing, threatening, or offensive manner: If these devices are used to spread messages or posts which have the potential to be viewed as offensive and can cause anger, outrage, disgust or humiliation, the penalty can be up to 3 years in jail.
2. Threats or intimidation: Trying to intentionally frighten someone by using any mobile devices, emails, or online posts is considered a criminal offence. The penalty for threatening to kill someone can be up to 10 years in jail. If the threat is based on an individual’s race, transgender identity or sexual orientation, the bully may be penalised for up to 6 months in jail.
3. Stalking: Cyberbullying is considered stalking when the bully repeatedly contacts an individual with the intent to intimidate or frighten them. This may involve unwanted phone calls, sending frequent text messages or emails and causing the victim to fear for their safety. This offence holds a maximum penalty of 5 years in jail.
4. Unauthorised access: Logging into another person’s online account without permission and viewing or altering their information is punishable by 2 years in jail.
5. Defamation: Publishing false information via the Internet to cause them serious harm is an offence punishable by 3 years in jail.
6. Encouraging suicide: Cyberbullying with an intent to instigate self-harm or suicide on the victim can send an offender to jail for 5 years.

**What is sexting?**

Sexting usually refers to:

* taking naked or partially naked photos or videos of yourself (posing in a sexual way) and sending the photos via the internet or mobile phones
* receiving or forwarding naked or partially naked photos or videos through mobile phones, internet and social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram.

Sexting can include images from film, movies, videos, photos, and digital images sent by SMS, email, chat rooms and publishing on blogs.

**Is sexting a crime?**

It’s illegal to create, send, possess or intend to possess images of someone aged (or who appears to be aged) under18 (including yourself) who is:

* involved in a sexual activity
* in a sexual pose
* acting in a sexual way
* showing their sexual parts.

You can be charged with a criminal offence for ‘possessing child exploitation materials’ if you’re aged 10 or over.

If you make or possess (have) illegal sexting images or send them to other people you may be charged with distributing child exploitation material, which is a serious crime. If you’re found guilty of this offence you could be sentenced to up to 7 years in jail if you are 16 or under, or 14 years in jail if you’re 17 or older.

**What should I do if I receive a photo or video?**

You won’t get into trouble if you were sent sexual images without asking for them and you deleted the images as soon as you could.

If you know the sender, let them know you do not want them to send you any more images. You may also want to talk to a trusted adult or the police about what happened. Get legal advice.

If the person continues to send you images report it to the police. Don’t forward these images onto other people as you may be charged with distributing child exploitation material.

It’s important to respect other people’s choices and their right to privacy and dignity.

For more information about sexting and the use of digital technology see:

* [Cyber bullying sexting and Facebook guide](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Find-legal-information/Factsheets-and-guides/Legal-information-guides/Cyber-bullying-sexting-and-Facebook-guide.-Know-the-law-know-your-rights)
* Lawstuff Australia website:
	+ [sexting](http://www.lawstuff.org.au/qld_law/topics/Sexting)
	+ [Photos and videos on your phone](http://www.lawstuff.org.au/qld_law/topics/article10).

**What if someone has shared a private photo of me?**

If someone has shared a photo of you without your consent there are a number of things you can do:

* if the image is on a social networking site like Facebook, you can [report the image to Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/help/reportlinks) and ask for it to be removed. The best way to do this is to use the report link that appears near the content.
* if you think an image on Facebook violates your privacy rights you can also ask Facebook to have them removed. See Facebook’s [image privacy rights](https://www.facebook.com/help/428478523862899/)
* talk to someone you trust—a parent, friend, school counsellor or teacher
* report it to the police if the images are being spread without your consent.

**Taking photos or videos of someone without their consent**

In Queensland, there are laws which make it illegal to take or distribute photos or videos of someone’s private parts or private activities without their consent —regardless of how old they are.
It’s a criminal offence to take or distribute photos or videos of someone without their consent when the person is:

* in a private place, or
* doing a private act in circumstances where they would reasonably expect privacy.

Private acts may include things like undressing, using the toilet, showering or bathing or having sex in a place where a person would reasonably expect privacy.

It’s also a criminal offence to take or distribute photos or videos of someone’s genital or anal region without their consent in circumstances where they would reasonably expect privacy. This applies even if their genitals or anal region are covered by underwear.

For example, it’s illegal to use a mobile phone in a public place to take photos of women’s underwear under their skirts without their consent.

The penalty for this type of offence is up 2 years imprisonment.

**General information**

There are lots of good websites that explain how to be cyber smart. Have a look at:

[www.bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/)
[www.staysmartonline.gov.au](http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/)
[www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/)
[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org/)
[www.thinkuknow.org.au](http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/)
[www.qld.gov.au/cybersafety](http://www.qld.gov.au/cybersafety)
[www.esafety.gov.au/women](https://www.esafety.gov.au/women)