COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Huntly Primary School staff will communicate with parents/carers and wider community, and to govern the use of social media as a form of communication that continues to become more widely adopted.

Teachers, students and parents are increasingly using digital technologies for professional purposes (i.e. teaching and learning) and personal purposes (i.e. communicating, creating and socialising) thus challenging the traditional concept of learning and communicating in a school setting.

Social media includes online platforms such as Facebook and blogs which are open to commentary, as well as websites and mobile device apps which all publish information that is readily accessible to an audience broader than parents/carers.

Our Communication and Social Media Policy aims to make respectful and ongoing connections with our parent, student, staff and wider communities and as such must be accessible to and inclusive of a diverse range of needs within the community. Printed communications will be legible and written in plain English. We encourage parents and carers to approach the office staff if they require information provided in a particular format eg, large font.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students and parent/carers in the Huntly Primary School community.

It aims to clarify the communication methods that will be used by the school, ensure information about school is provided in a format that is readily accessible to the community and govern the use any social media platform in any personal and/or professional capacity.

This policy will assist the whole school community to use social media to:

- Engage with the wider community as a communication tool, allowing parents/carers to see what is happening across the school

- Integrate with and support teaching and learning

- Showcase student work and celebrate achievements at school

- Administer social media platforms in an authorised capacity or make contributions in a professional capacity on education and school related issues

- Ensure consistent and correct information is shared amongst our community

Notes and forms, sent home on pink and yellow coloured paper, remain the primary mechanism of communication used by Huntly Primary School.
These enable students and their parents/carers to prepare for, and be ready to participate in activities such as excursions, special food and theme days, sports activities etc.

3. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

TOOL	LOCATION	DETAIL
Notes and forms	Distribution: Sent home with students as required. Return: Forms (eg. pink forms, absence notes) should be returned via the Office Post Box or directly to the office. • If making a payment, a "deposit" envelope (available from the office) should be used to enclose the pink form and payments if using cash. • If using EFT, return forms directly to the office.	Important information specific to your child regarding activities they can participate in, as well as general information or opportunities for parent/carer participation at school. They often include dates and times which should be diarised, as well as information about how students should prepare so as they are ready to participate. Pink: Forms that require a response (eg. excursion approval and payment). Parents should retain the top section these forms which provides important information about activities and the time and date they will occur. Yellow: Notes for information.
Email, telephone, post, face to face.	Parents are encouraged to keep their contact details up-to-date. Appointments with classroom teachers can be made before or after school hours or at a mutually convenient time.	Staff will call or send information to parents/carers directly as required. Parents/carers are encouraged to seek information directly by: • Making an appointment to meet with a classroom teacher or the Principal. • Visiting the school office. • Calling the school. • Visiting social media managed by Huntly Primary School.

TOOL	LOCATION	DETAIL
Flexibuzz	App: Download Flexibuzz app. to mobile device, register, and search Huntly Primary School in "Schools, Primary", add year levels of interest. Web: Access Flexibuzz via the web (http://www.flexibuzz.com.au), register, and search Huntly Primary School, add year levels of interest.	SMS style notifications for general and urgent information. • General information such as upcoming meetings and event reminders, reports from the Principal, School Council, and Parents Group, and other news. • Urgent notifications such as Code Red days and cancelled events.
Assembly	Monday morning from 9.05am on the hand slam quadrangle area (weather permitting). • Note: cancellation of Assembly will be advised via Flexibuzz.	A celebration and acknowledgement students who display the school values, and an opportunity to come together as a whole school community and share information. We invite all of the parents/carers to come and join us at assembly on Mondays.
Blogs	Website link provided to class students at the commencement of each year. Students must sign a User Agreement before any of their photographs or work is posted.	Sharing of classroom news and activities including photographs and videos. Content is regularly posted by teachers and, in senior year levels, by students. Student of the Week will be announced via class blogs to enable parents/carers to plan to attend at assembly to watch their child receive their award. Blogs are used as a supplementary learning tool and parents/carers are encouraged to regularly view and discuss the blog content with their child. Feedback via comments is encouraged from parents/carers and students. Comments are moderated by classroom teachers before they are made public, and where a response is required, this will be made by a classroom teacher within 48 hours.

TOOL	LOCATION	DETAIL
Facebook	App: Download Facebook app. to mobile device. Search Huntly Primary School and like or follow the page. Web: Access Facebook via the web and search Huntly Primary School and like or follow the page.	Celebrating school activities including photographs and videos. Content is posted by teachers. Parents/carers are encouraged like or follow the Huntly Primary School page if they would like to receive notifications when information is posted. Parents/carers can like, comment/ask questions, and share links from this page. Comments and questions will be moderated by Huntly Primary School staff. A staff member will respond to questions within 48 hours.
Website	http://www.huntly-ps.vic.edu.au/wordpress/	Online copies of the School newsletter. School policies. General information about the school. Outside School Hours Care information.
Newsletter	Available online on the Huntly Primary School website. Some printed copies available in the School office.	Published weekly on a Wednesday afternoon. Includes important dates, Principal report, School Council update, Parents Group news, award winners, and other general information. Parents/carers are encouraged to read the newsletter and diarise important dates for future reference.

4. GETTING THE MOST OUT OF OUR COMMUNICATION TOOLS

To assist Huntly Primary School in implementing successful communication, parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Develop a system of communication and time management at home to ensure that notes and forms are not left in school bags, and that together, students and parents/carers can prepare and plan for upcoming activities

- Read information from our range of communication tools such as "Flexibuzz", the newsletter and social media

- Contact their child's teacher first regarding any enquiries specifically about their child. If a matter is not able to be dealt with at this level, a parent may arrange a meeting with the Principal

- Raise any concerns regarding the school directly to the Principal, staff or to a member of the school council

- Ensure contact details (addresses, phone numbers) and medical information are correct and up to date

- Regularly look at classroom blogs with your child and actively discuss the content / comment together

- Model effective and positive communication behaviour

- Attend parent-teacher interviews and other information events such as "Partners in Print"

- Be aware of school policies

5. SOCIAL MEDIA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Any contributions through the use of social media on any site as branded by Huntly Primary School is the direct responsibility of the School.

Huntly Primary School **will not** use any social media platform as the primary communication method with students and their parents/carers.

It is the direct responsibility of the School to:

- Regularly make checks on the various platforms used, and where required, respond within 48 hours

- Effectively manage any communication that may be deemed offensive and/or inappropriate

- Report immediately any evidence of harassment, bullying, or personal attacks to the school leadership team

- Where social media platforms are used for learning, that applicable teaching staff are aware of their responsibility to maintain, manage and report if necessary

The Principal will:

- Ensure all staff, students and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities

- Communicate to new and existing parents on regular basis at assemblies, newsletters, website, policy and other suitable mediums, their responsibilities regarding posts, supervision of their children and conditions in this policy

- Alert staff and parents/carers where further action or investigation may be required. Where able, provide supporting evidence such as screen-shots or transcripts

- Inform parents/carers and or police if any considered abuse, misuse, bullying, etc occurs. Work restoratively with students and parents

Staff members are responsible for maintaining a high level of professionalism with respect to the school and their position as an educator of young students. This will be maintained through:

- Establishing clear and professional boundaries with students and parents whilst ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place, such as privacy settings

- Ensuring that contributions to personal social media accounts maintain the values and reputation of Huntly Primary School and are reflective of the profession

6. APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

When staff, students or parent/carers contribute to social media in either a personal or professional capacity and discuss or identify Huntly Primary School, they should consider the below listed items of appropriate use.

- Remain acutely aware of the audience to any social media community – Eg. "If I post this here, who will be able to see it?" And, "How will it make them feel?"

- Ensure any posted material is respectful towards individuals and the values of Huntly Primary School - RESPECT, RESILIENCE, TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION and COMMUNITY

- Parents / Carers should not post images or video of any child other than their own

- Not post material that is offensive, hurtful, hateful, sexist, defamatory, threatening, harassing, breaches any Court Suppression Order or is illegal in nature

- Ensure personal details are protected and not openly shared

- Ensure copyright laws are adhered to and original work is referenced accordingly

Where applicable, references to students (eg. work samples, photos, sporting achievements) will have full names and personal details concealed. All photos/videos uploaded to any official social media platform will go through a central control point at the school.

7. OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES

Huntly Primary School recognises that other online social communities can also make a valuable contribution to a sense of place and inclusion for parents/carers.

However, these online communities should not be considered a complete or primary source of information about Huntly Primary School. It is not the responsibility of moderators or contributors to other social media sites, to provide information about Huntly Primary School.

However, the school does welcome the sharing of electronic links to information made publicly accessible by Huntly Primary School (eg. links to newsletters on the website, or to posts on Facebook) to facilitate broader distribution of information and sharing school celebrations.

Huntly Primary School staff, including School Councillors, will not directly comment within other forums to share information about the School.

If staff, students, or parents/carers become aware of a question or issue regarding Huntly Primary School being raised on another social media site, they are encouraged to notify to the Principal, a staff member or School Councillor so it can be dealt with efficiently by staff. If it is deemed that a response is required, these

will be relayed using one of the communication methods managed by Huntly Primary School, within 48 hours of the notification.

Parents are encouraged to be a positive role model by demonstrating respectful and responsible behaviours when communicating with and about our school online.

Parents/carers are advised against discussing information or commenting about students, regardless of the context; or posting photos/videos that includes students on other online social communities when it includes a child other than your own.

The attached "Parents Fact Sheet: Social Media and Your School" provides additional information.

If you have an amazing photo/video of a school activity, we encourage you to send it directly to Huntly Primary School via email so it can be shared in an appropriate manner.

Collection, use and disclosure by the school of photography and film:

To comply with the Information and Privacy Act, consent will generally be required from parents/carers before schools can collect and use student photographs and film. In some instances, additional consent may be required to ensure compliance with the *Copyright Act*.

This table summarises what documentation is required to enable schools to collect, use and disclose photographs, video and digital images in certain circumstances.

Collection type	School Use	Disclosure to third parties	Documentation required
Official school photographs	• Storage on CASES21 • School identification cards	• Parents / guardians • School magazine	• School-level policy • Specific Consent Form for School Photographs
Other school photos, video, film, digital images	• School newsletters • Intranet • Within the school	• School magazine • School website • Other internet websites • Media	• School-level policy • General Consent Form (if for school use only) • Specific Consent Form (if for disclosure to third parties) • Copyright Release Form

8. SUPPORTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Raising and Addressing Parent Concerns and Complaints:
http://www.huntly-ps.vic.edu.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Parent-Concerns-Complaints-Policy.pdf

Student Engagement Policy:

http://www.huntly-ps.vic.edu.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Student-Engagement-Policy-2016.pdf

Care Arrangements for Ill Students Policy and Procedure:
http://www.huntly-ps.vic.edu.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Care-Arrangement-for-Students-Policy.pdf

Standing Orders and Staff Protocols for Meetings

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

The National Safe School Framework:
http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home

The E-Smart Schools Framework:
https://www.esmartschools.org.au

Australian Communication and Media Authority, Cybersmart website: http://www.cybersmart.gov.au

PARENT FACT SHEET: SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUR SCHOOL

Be a positive role model by demonstrating respectful and responsible behaviours when communicating with and about your child's school online.

Times have changed

A few years ago parents discussed concerns or issues with friends at the school gate. Today, with the internet, mobile phones and social media, discussions between you and your friends can reach a far wider audience than ever before.

Social media can provide an enjoyable way to socialise online and keep you connected with what is going on in your school community.

While these technologies can be great for sharing ideas and keeping in touch, don't forget that comments about your school community can have greater impact than expected and can have very real consequences for the reputations of individuals including teachers, principals, other parents, students and yourself.

As a parent and carer, you are your child's first role model when it comes to online behaviour. Make sure your online conduct demonstrates how they can use social media respectfully and safely.

There are also legal implications around what people are able post and share about others. The idea of privacy in the online world can be confusing but essentially posting or sharing personal information about another person online requires consent.

Top tips for positive and respectful online communication with your school community

Avoid posting negative comments that identify your school or individuals.

Feedback from the school community is important for schools and the department. Each Victorian Government school has a complaints process for raising concerns. If you have a concern, rather than go online, speak directly to your child's teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal.

If after having this conversation you feel that your concerns have not been resolved, you can contact the **Community Liaison Officer** at your closest Department of Education and Training Regional Office, who will assist you and the school to find a solution. For more information on raising a concern or issue with your child's school see: **http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx**

Remember: serious instances of inappropriate online behavior may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. School staff may obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation.

Try not to be emotive or hasty. Keep comments calm and polite.

Before you post something online about your child's school ask yourself:

- Am I being a good role model for my child?
- Will this information reflect badly on me?
- Does the school community or individual really need to know this information?
- Is this information relevant, helpful and positive?
- Will this information upset or embarrass the school community or an individual?
- Am I making situation worse?

If things do get heated online consider logging out and taking time to relax.

Be aware of what you are sharing and with whom.

Remember that the legal implications around sharing personal information applies to images and video presented online.

As the parent/carer of your child, you have the right to choose who sees your child's personal information, including their image online. You also have a responsibility to **not share** the personal details of other children.

If you upload photos on social media of school events, be aware of who is in the background. Some parents and caregivers do not want themselves or their children on social media. It is recommended that you never tag a child's image with any personal information.

If your child's personal information or image has been shared on social media without your consent you can request its removal by the social network hosting it.

All Victorian Government schools have a policy on if and when it is appropriate to use cameras for filming or photographing school events. You can contact your child's school for more information.

If you share pictures of your children publicly through online photo-sharing sites and hashtags, remember that once it is shared, you have no control over how it is used or by whom. To avoid these photos being shared by others or used for purposes without your consent, make sure you set up your account security settings to share images only with close family and friends.

Get to know social media.

It may be helpful to research online networks and mobile applications. In particular look at:

- Terms of Use

- Policies and procedures for the removal of content

- Privacy settings

Be proactive.

If you see something you feel should be removed, flag it. Some sites will allow you to do this anonymously.

Address inappropriate content.

If you encounter inappropriate content online, there are a number of steps you can take:

- Refrain from responding.

- Take a screen capture or print a copy of the concerning online content.

- If you think the content is explicit, pornographic or exploitative of minors, contact the eSafety Commission **https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting**

- Block the offending user.

- If the inappropriate or negative comments are in regards to your child's school or members of the school community you should also contact the school Principal.

- Report the content to the social media provider (e.g. Facebook). Providers can remove content that contravenes their Terms of Use.

How do I report inappropriate content?

Most website have a '**report/block this person**' or 'r**eport/block this content**' function. Links to report or block users can be found below:

Facebook: **www.facebook.com/safety**

Instagram: **help.instagram.com**

Google (including YouTube): **google.com/support/go/legal**

Tumblr: **www.tumblr.com/help**

Twitter: **support.twitter.com**

eSafety Commissioner: **https://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting**

Further information

eSafety Commissioner: **https://www.esafety.gov.au/**

Bully Stoppers: **www.education.vic.gov.au/bullystoppers**

A copy of this factsheet can be downloaded from

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/parentsocialmediaschoolcommunity.pdf

The Communication and Social Media policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy was last ratified by Huntly Primary School Council on _____

                                                                            Date

By: _____   _____

                    Principal   School Council President