

Social Media for P&Cs

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter can be fantastic tools for Associations to quickly and easily connect and communicate with members. Reputation management and careful planning are key components to establishing social media accounts. The following information provides recommended terms of use and should be used as a guide when setting up any social media account for your P&C.

Which Platform is the best option for your message?

Facebook

A Facebook page can act as a very effective notice board for the P&C, where members and the public can easily keep track of news, events and opinions. It is also a great tool for promotion, advertising and discussion, and offers the ability for members to ask a question or leave feedback without the hassle of making a phone call or sending multiple emails. Facebook pages can also be a key space in which to attract potential sponsors for events such as fêtes. Facebook is free, with an additional option for paid advertising to promote events or gain 'likes.' WACSSO does not recommend the establishment of Facebook 'Groups' particularly 'closed' or 'secret' groups as these are not in the spirit of creating an open and transparent community. Facebook is also good for tracking potential members who are engaging with your P&C online. The simple act of 'liking' or 'sharing' indicates a person may be a future volunteer or member.

Twitter

Twitter is a fast-paced platform that has the biggest active user numbers in the world – if you want lots of people to hear your message, it can be very effective. Twitter can be a fantastic tool for the savvy P&C that wants to engage with like-minded organisations and community members on bigger-picture education issues (great at WACSSO Conference!) Think about whether your audience is using Twitter – if so, it could be the right move for your P&C.

Instagram

Instagram is a useful social media platform for producing visually engaging content. Posting images of P&C activities such as fêtes and fundraising events is a great way to show off your P&C; using the tagging and story features is another great way to engage your audience.

TikTok

TikTok is a dynamic platform that is very popular amongst young people. It can be a fun and new mode of showing P&C events and activities, by publishing promotional and engaging videos, and is a great platform to rapidly increase your audience numbers and range. While TikTok can be a great way to expand your audience and reach new groups of people, the algorithm TikTok uses can be difficult to predict therefore it is hard to know who will see your content. It is essential for videos to have relevant captions and hashtags to increase the chances of engaging with the right audience. Most users scroll through their 'For You' page which is based on their preferences, location and what the algorithm thinks the user will like. With the right captions and hashtags, videos have a higher chance of reaching other users 'For You' page which will ultimately increase engagement. User interaction is also very important, so if videos are commented on, liked and viewed many times, they are more likely to be featured in other people's 'For You' page.

Some things that P&Cs should be wary of when using TikTok:

1. Like any social media platform, P&Cs should familiarize themselves TikTok as a user before setting up a profile and posting content. Unlike Facebook and Instagram, TikTok is a highly public platform and has many different nuances that might be unfamiliar to some.
2. P&Cs should be conscious of keeping up with comments on TikTok, especially negative ones. Being a highly public platform, the risk of attracting negative commentary is higher. P&Cs should have an agreed process for handling comments before setting up a profile.
3. Following trends and using popular sounds is important for engagement but P&Cs should be careful with using sounds or following trends that have controversial meanings. P&Cs should do proper research before using certain sounds or following trends on TikTok.
4. Using popular music is a great way to increase visibility on TikTok, however, copyright can be an issue (as is the case for all platforms), especially in the case of music. TikTok has a royalty free music collection for commercial use and for general purposes and it recommended P&Cs make use of this collection in videos.

Social Media for P&Cs Continued

Establish your reason/s for operation

A social media account (i.e. Facebook page) operating under the name and for the purpose of a P&C Association can be established for one or more of the following reasons:

- Communicating news, information and issues to the school community
- Organising and promoting P&C-run or school community events
- Research, discussion, raising questions or topics in the school community
- Advertising (P&C related)
- Administrative purposes

It is important to remember that any P&C social media account transmits a digital image of that committee to the wider community. At all times it should represent your P&C in a professional manner. It is also important to bear in mind that social media is a 24/7 environment, and you will need to establish a roster of people who have responsibility for your accounts.

Identify your target audience and key messages

The audience for your social media account could include P&C members, parents, the wider school community, potential sponsors, or even the media. What do you want to say to these groups? Think about a range of different and interesting posts that the P&C could make on the page. It is a good idea to vary the type of posts, include links and pictures and keep up the two-way conversation by asking questions, after all, interaction and engagement is what social media is all about!

Authorisation of operation

The establishment of a social media account specifically for any P&C must be voted on and passed by the General Meeting. It should not be a decision made by any one, or group of individuals. The account should be titled in accordance with the authorised name of the Association to ensure it is clear who the account is representing.

Code of Conduct

It is recommended that when voting on the establishment of a social media account, a Code of Conduct such as the following should also be adopted. This can be included within your account profile, for Facebook this would be shown on the 'About' page.

All users of a social media account representing a P&C Association must adhere to the following:

- Comments, post and responses to the page must be related to the P&C, the school community or in reply to a post left by the administrator on behalf of the P&C.
- Discussion must remain professional and personal topics are not to be discussed.
- As Facebook pages are public spaces, comments relating personally to any individual or group are not to be discussed.
- Defamatory or derogatory comments are not permitted.
- Swearing, obscene and abusive language is not permitted.
- Rude or obscene photographs, or links to photographs, are not to be posted on the page.
- All advertisements posted on the page must be approved by the administrators.
- Derogatory, defamatory, confrontational or incorrect information relating to a P&C committee's employee or administrative position should not be discussed on the page.
- Information relating to the financial position, direction or account details of the P&C should not be discussed on the page as it is in the public arena.
- Personal information related to specific individuals of the P&C, that the individual does not agree to be released, should not be discussed.
- Permission must be granted by the subject/s, or their parent/carer, of any content before it is posted.

Administration

The administrator/s of the account (recommend up to three members) must be appointed at a General Meeting. If there are several candidates requesting the role of administrator, a vote shall be held to decide. The establishment of a dummy profile using the P&C's generic email address is recommended for establishing the account. Individual members can then be authorised as 'administrators' of the account.

The administrator's responsibilities include:

- Posting information, news, questions and other material to the account with approval from the President in circumstances where it is needed.
- Responding to queries raised through the account or referring these to a relevant person for response.
- Deletion of comments that breach the Code of Conduct.
- Removal and/or banning of any user who breaches the Code of Conduct continuously.
- Reporting back at General Meetings any enquiries, queries or matters raised on the page.

Social Media FAQs

Can the P&C open its own Facebook Page or other social media account?

Yes. When used wisely, social media can be a fantastic tool for communicating with members and the school community and promoting the P&C's great work. The P&C must discuss and then vote at a general meeting to establish a Facebook Page or other social media account.

Our school Principal has said our P&C Facebook page has to close because there has been too much negativity, gossip and misinformation. What do we do?

Closing down a social media account must be carried out through a vote at a general meeting of the P&C. It is not the decision of a single individual. However, if the page has become toxic the P&C must think long and hard whether it is fulfilling its purpose – benefitting the operations of the P&C and thus the students at the school. If the page is not operating successfully, closure is an option. The P&C should conduct a review of the page and its operations to see whether it is aligned with WACSSO's Social Media Guideline. If not, changes or closure may be warranted.

A parent has made a complaint or negative comment about a staff member or P&C member on the P&C Facebook page. How do I respond?

The administrator for the page should respond politely that social media is not the appropriate channel for personal complaints and then refer the commenter to the relevant authorised person such as the school Principal or P&C President. If the comment is inappropriate, abusive, offensive or defamatory, it should be deleted or hidden by the administrator. Remember that you should always take a screen shot of content prior to deleting it.

A parent who owns local business wants to post advertisements on our Facebook page. Can we allow this?

A P&C can establish a sponsorship agreement with a business for advertising on the FB page an event such as a fête. The agreement may include acknowledgement through the P&Cs communication channels, including on social media, but there should be a very specific scope for this.

Our P&C is holding a fête and we want to attract the wider public to attend. Is the P&C allowed to undertake paid Facebook advertising of our event?

Facebook advertising can be an effective way of reaching outside of the immediate school community and into the wider local area to let the public know about your event, for minimal cost. Facebook advertising can be tailored to a specific geographical area or demographic and the P&C can set the spending limit they wish to adhere to. Any financial outlay by the P&C must be voted on at a general meeting and the P&C must discuss whether it believes there would be a cost or other benefit to undertaking the advertising. The P&C should also investigate all forms of free advertising, such as an article in the local newspaper, word-of-mouth, or posting flyers at local shopping centres or playgroups.

Social Media Account Checklist

Things To Consider

Before resolving to create a social media account, has your P&C considered the following?	Yes (Tick)
Will the social media account benefit the operations of the P&C and thus benefit the students at the school?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you discussed who your audience is and what key messages you would like to express?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social media accounts like Facebook need to be monitored after hours, on weekends and on holidays. Do you have one or more P&C members prepared to do this?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a generic email account that can be used to establish the account, accessible by a range of individuals who can act as site administrators?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you established: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will be the administrator/s of the account• The correct tone for the posts and the types of messages you want to post?• How you will respond to posts – negative and positive?• How often you aim to post on the account?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ensured no content (intellectual property, music, TV or film footage) will be uploaded without explicit approval from the content owner?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ensured no identifying information or photos of students or school staff will be/can be uploaded to the accounts without explicit permission?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you discussed how you are going to let people know about your new social media account (e.g. an article in the newsletter, an announcement at assembly)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you read the Terms of Service of the nominated Social Media sites? facebook.com/terms twitter.com/tos help.instagram.com/581066165581870	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you established a Code of Conduct or Social Media Policy for your P&C?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please note:

P&Cs are reminded there are legal ramifications associated with both posting and administrating (including moderating) social media accounts. P&Cs should understand that issues such as breach of copyright and defamation are common in Australia. All users of social media are encouraged to think carefully before posting, to re-read their posts and consider how they might be read by others, and to check they aren't using any materials (logos, photos, music, artworks, etc) that may be subject to copyright or a trademark. P&Cs should also be aware that if they run a social media page or group, or any community platform where people can comment, they may be held responsible, under current defamation law, for everything that anyone else posts. This is regardless of whether the P&Cs agrees with the comment, or even if they are unaware that the comment has been made. A moderation schedule is essential for the smooth operation of your social media accounts. Rulings relating to defamation and copyright breaches can apply to both public and private accounts and groups on all social media platforms.