



# Social Media

E/6.4

## Purpose

This policy governs the use of social media for the purposes of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod and personal use relating to Queensland Synod responsibilities and the Queensland Synod's reputation. The policy outlines the requirements of ministry agents, lay staff and volunteers regarding the personal use of social media as it relates to their association with the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod. This policy guides all individuals defined under the scope of this policy on how to maintain their own and the Queensland Synod's professional integrity and reputation when using social media.

This policy supports the Queensland Synod to leverage the full benefits of social media by safely participating in online communities. It helps us to support the mission of the church by:

- building networks of communities/groups and share experiences of relational connections
- developing awareness of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Queensland Synod and its activities in the broader community
- promoting the church and the response to the call of Christ in the broader community.

Congregational councils, congregational services and presbyteries are encouraged to adopt and adapt this policy for their own requirements.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (lay staff) and volunteers engaged in work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office including Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College and Alexandra Park Conference Centre.
- All ministry agents who have a placement within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office including Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College and Alexandra Park Conference Centre.

Compliance is achieved through adherence to the Principles.

## Policy

### 1. Use of social media for the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod purposes

- 1.1. Social media is used to connect the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod with communities and congregations, clients of congregational services, potential lay staff and volunteers. Social media is used as part of a wider communications strategy and not as a stand-alone communication tool.
- 1.2. Social media accounts must be appropriately resourced, actively managed and regularly updated by a nominated member of the Mission Engagement Team (acting as the social media administrator) as out of date sites can cause reputational damage. The Mission Engagement Team will oversee all Synod office accounts and can provide advice in the use of approved social media accounts by congregational councils or presbyteries.

### 2. Use of social media by lay staff and ministry agents for personal purposes at work

- 2.1. Personal use of social media using the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod resources is acceptable under the following conditions:
  - 2.1.1. It is confined to short and infrequent periods of use within personal break times

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- 2.1.2. It does not interfere with a lay staff or ministry agent fulfilling the responsibilities of their position/calling or the operations of the Queensland Synod.
- 2.2. Use of the approved inhouse social media platform using the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod resources is acceptable under the following conditions:
  - 2.2.1. It does not interfere with fulfilling the responsibilities of their position/calling or the operations of the Queensland Synod.
  - 2.3. Use of social media by ministry agents that constitutes sexual misconduct will result in action in accordance with 5.6 of the Regulations – Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee. Use of social media by a ministry agent that is contrary to the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice or POL-0001 Privacy may result in discipline action in accordance with the prescribed Regulations.
  - 2.4. Use of social media by lay staff that is contrary to B/1.1 Privacy Policy, E/5.1 Prevention of Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy (Queensland Synod only), E/5.2 Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Employment Equity Policy (Queensland Synod only), E/5.5 Code of Conduct or Information Security Usage Policy (Queensland Synod only) will result in performance management action by the relevant person in charge.
- 3. Personal use of social media by lay staff and ministry agents**
  - 3.1. Lay staff and ministry agents may acknowledge their employment with the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, “like” or “follow” Uniting Church in Australia pages and/or share posts from Uniting Church in Australia pages within their personal networks.
  - 3.2. Lay staff and ministry agents must consider the privacy, safety and reputation of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod and its members when using their personal social media accounts. Lay staff and ministry agents must manage all personal and professional boundaries according to the following guidelines:
    - 3.2.1. Ensure that social media content does not contravene the stated policies/Code of Ethics and understand fully that any contravention may result in performance management or disciplinary action;
    - 3.2.2. Do not initiate or maintain contact with current clients or family members of clients of Queensland Synod services, except in cases where required to conduct a service or for an identified Queensland Synod need;
    - 3.2.3. Do not publish comments or material about clients of Queensland Synod services (including names, client details or images);
    - 3.2.4. Do not imply that they are representing Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod or its views/interests in social media communication;
    - 3.2.5. Take reasonable steps to ensure their personal social media use does not damage the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod’s reputation or commercial interests;
    - 3.2.6. Only disclose information related to the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod that is publicly available;
    - 3.2.7. Do not use Uniting Church in Australia or Queensland Synod logos or brands (included associated brands) for any personal posting/broadcast.
  - 3.3. Use of the approved inhouse social media platform is considered personal use; however, lay staff and ministry agents will not need to acknowledge their employment or placement with the Church.



#### 4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. All individuals within the Queensland Synod are personally responsible for making this Social Media Policy work.
- 4.2. All individuals must:
  - 4.2.1. act within the law (including the Privacy Act and copyright law); and
  - 4.2.2. discharge their individual duties and responsibilities with integrity and professionalism; and
  - 4.2.3. comply with confidentiality conditions of an employment contract or for placements comply with the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice; and
  - 4.2.4. comply with this Social Media Policy and the related Synod Guide to Using Social Media prescribed by the Queensland Synod from time to time; and
  - 4.2.5. notify the relevant person in charge in the event they become aware of any breach (by themselves or another individual) of the Social Media Policy; and
  - 4.2.6. notify the relevant person in charge if they do not understand any part of the Social Media Policy or any related process.
- 4.3. All relevant persons in charge must, in addition to their responsibilities as an individual:
  - 4.3.1. take reasonable steps to ensure that those of whom they have oversight know about and understand the Social Media Policy and related processes;
  - 4.3.2. if notified of a breach, follow the appropriate performance management or discipline process;
  - 4.3.3. in relation to a request for guidance regarding whether there is a breach of the Social Media Policy, refer the request to the Manager People and Culture and the Manager Mission Engagement for their advice;
  - 4.3.4. take reasonable steps to ensure that the related guide to using social media is followed; and
  - 4.3.5. follow the processes prescribed from time to time by the Queensland Synod if a breach of the Social Media Policy or related guide is reported.
- 4.4. The Manager Mission Engagement must, in addition to their responsibilities as an individual:
  - 4.4.1. provide support and advice on the use of social media;
  - 4.4.2. ensure governance requirements are met for Queensland Synod accounts
  - 4.4.3. ensure the use of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod brand is adhered to on Queensland Synod social media sites.
- 4.5. The Manager People and Culture must, in addition to their responsibilities as an individual:
  - 4.5.1. provide advice and support to the relevant person in charge in responding to incidents of inappropriate use of social media;
  - 4.5.2. notify the Manager Mission Engagement to any risk to the reputation of The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod and/or the Synod office.



## Related documents

- [The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations](#)
- [The Uniting Church in Australia – Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice](#)
- [B/1.1 Privacy Policy](#)
- [E/5.1 Prevention of Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy](#) (Queensland Synod only)
- [E/5.2 Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Employment Equity Policy](#) (Queensland Synod only)
- [E/5.5 Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [E/6.4.1 Signing into Workplace by Facebook](#)
- [E/6.4.2 Managing notifications on Workplace by Facebook](#)
- [E/6.4.3 Groups on Workplace by Facebook](#)
- [E/6.4.4 Posting on Workplace by Facebook](#)
- [Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice](#)
- Synod Guide to Using Social Media (8 October 2014)
- [Information Technology Usage Policy](#) (Queensland Synod only)
- The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod [Brand Protocols](#)
- The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod [Style Protocols](#)

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
Queensland Synod	Means the work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia performed within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office including Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College and Alexandra Park Conference Centre.
Member	Means Uniting Church adherents, confirmed members, baptised members, elders, members-in-association, ministry agents and individuals who are members of any Uniting Church in Queensland church council, commission, committee or board.
Ministry agent	Means ministry candidates, Deacons, Deaconesses, Lay Pastors, Ministers of the Word, Pastors and Ministers from other denominations serving in approved placements.
Relevant person in charge	Means the person to whom a person directly reports to within a congregation, presbytery or the Queensland Synod office and for the purposes of the Moderator and the General Secretary that will be the Synod Standing Committee.
Social media	Refers to any technological application or virtual place where individuals can converse, exchange or broadcast ideas through visual, audio or written means and build new connections, friendships and do business. Social media includes, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• micro-blogging sites including Twitter</li><li>• social networking sites e.g. Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn</li><li>• video and photo sharing sites e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr, TikTok, SnapChat</li><li>• an inhouse social media platform e.g. Workplace by Facebook, Perkbox</li><li>• weblogs including corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications</li><li>• forums and discussion boards e.g. Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups</li><li>• online encyclopaedias e.g. Wikipedia</li><li>• any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools.</li></ul>



Term	Meaning
Social media administrator	Means an individual within a program, service or directorate who has been identified and approved as an administrator for a local social media account. The relevant person in charge is responsible for appointing a social media administrator and ensuring they are familiar with the Social Media Policy and Synod Guide to Using Social Media prior to commencing this duty.
Lay staff	For the purposes of this policy, lay staff includes employees and volunteers.
Clients	Individuals accessing the identified services of the Queensland Synod i.e. Trinity College Queensland (including Trinity Theological Library), Raymont Residential College (including the café) and Alexandra Park Conference Centre. Clients also include participants of defined events managed by the Queensland Synod e.g. Easter Madness.

## Revisions

Document number	E/6.4				
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
1.2	22.02.2021	Executive Leadership Team	01.03.2021	People and Culture	People and Culture Manager
Next scheduled review	01.07.2022				