

1. INTRODUCTION

Curro Holdings Limited and its subsidiaries (excluding the Embury Institute for Teacher Education (Pty) Ltd which is governed by its policies), herein referred to as Curro and/or the Company, recognises the evolution of social media as a mechanism of communication in education and a mechanism of communication in our daily lives. It has become an important and powerful tool from which huge benefit can be derived. However, if social media is not used responsibly, it presents huge risks to individuals and organisations. The negative consequences of social media use can have long-lasting repercussions. To optimise the responsible use of social media, Curro encourages and expects that its employees, learners and parents/guardians use social media in adherence with appropriate and acceptable practises governing such use.

While Curro facilitates an open and expressive environment and respects the right to free speech, it also recognises the obligation of all citizens to ensure that communications are lawful and do not cause harm to its employees, learners, parents/guardians, Curro and third parties.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to govern the use of any social media platforms by Curro employees, learners and parents/guardians in the communication of any Curro related information and the appropriate use of any social media platforms in any communication that may be linked to Curro in any way, whether these platforms are enabled by Curro or by third parties.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all users of Curro information and information systems which fall under the control of Curro. It also applies to the expression of opinions or comments by Curro employees, learners and parents/guardians on social media, which may in any manner link employees, learners and parents/guardians to Curro. This policy supersedes any previous policy.

4. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For purposes of this policy, “social media” means any facility for online publication and commentary, including, without limitation, blogs, wikis and platforms such as Facebook, Google Plus, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and any other forms of communication that may now and in the future be classified or generally regarded as social media.

5. POLICY STATEMENTS

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 Curro recognises the opportunities and challenges provided for communication via social media platforms for employees, learners and parents/guardians.
- 5.1.2 This policy is to encourage employees, learners and parents/guardians to use social media responsibly.
- 5.1.3 This policy is to empower users of Curro information, information systems and third party information systems facilitated by social media platforms to understand both the benefits and potential risks related to using social media so that they may enhance their use and avoid or mitigate the associated risks.
- 5.1.4 Curro recognises that the evolution of social media is occurring at an unprecedented rate and that this policy will therefore need regular review to ensure that it remains relevant, assists in the governance of the use of social media by employees, learners and parents/guardians and facilitates the continuous education of employees, learners and parents/guardians.

5.2 Curro employees

Curro employees shall:

- 5.2.1 Not engage in communications with learners at Curro which, in the context of the educator/learner relationship, are in any manner inappropriate and shall guard against entering into communications originated by learners addressed to them which are inappropriate in any way.

- 5.2.2 Take appropriate steps to warn learners who initiate inappropriate communications of any nature, including social media, that such communication is inappropriate and, if necessary, will follow appropriate disciplinary channels in dealing with inappropriate communications.
- 5.2.3 Should an employee become aware of inappropriate communication between an employee and a learner, this should instantly be reported to the executive head.
- 5.2.4 Should an employee become aware of a discussion, conversation thread, posting, comment, statement or misrepresentation about Curro, its employees, learners or parents/guardians, the executive head should be alerted about this as soon as possible. The employee should not engage in any form of communication regarding this thread or post on behalf of Curro unless explicitly instructed otherwise.

5.3 Social media provided by Curro

All persons using social media platforms made available on Curro information systems and its website shall adhere to this policy and the terms and conditions governing the use of the website and each of the social media platforms.

5.4 Social media

Curro employees, learners and parents/guardians using any social media platform in any manner which may link their use to Curro shall:

- 5.4.1 Adhere to relevant policies, procedures and standards published by Curro governing the publication or reproduction of information from Curro, Curro information security and communications by Curro employees.
- 5.4.2 If they have the authority to make such claims on behalf of Curro, then they must state and outline the detail of this authority in these communications.
- 5.4.3 If they do not have the authority, they must clearly state that the content is their own opinion and does not represent the opinions of Curro or any other individual at Curro. However, this disclaimer does not remove any potential liability for them in terms of this policy.
- 5.5.4 Not use the Curro name, logo or any other information which may link the user to Curro without the prior written consent of the executive head.

- 5.5.5 Adhere to the terms and conditions governing the use of social media on the social media platforms that they use.
- 5.5.6 Not communicate unsolicited communications of any type.
- 5.5.7 Not impersonate third parties in a manner that is intended or does confuse or deceive acceptance of the communication by them.
- 5.5.8 Curro employees, learners and parents/guardians using any social media platform that may in any manner link such use with Curro, shall not post any information originating from Curro or alternatively repost/retweet any information emanating from a third person that includes:
- Content that may be used for any unlawful purposes or the furtherance of illegal activities.
 - Any person's private information, including video recordings, photographs or images of the person of whatever nature, without prior consent of the person.
 - Any threats of violence or harm of any type.
 - Any content that amounts to hate speech. Hate speech is harmful or hateful content that discriminates on the basis of prohibited grounds such as race, religion, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
 - Any obscene or pornographic images.
 - Any communication or image which may be defamatory or violates the personal rights of any party.
 - Any communication which is offensive, threatening, abusive, harassing or harmful.
 - Any communication which infringes the intellectual property rights of any third person
 - Any information that is fraudulent or untrue.
 - Information deemed detrimental to Curro or any employee, learner or parent/guardian at Curro.

Remember that, even if you did not originate the content, you will be responsible for material that you report, retweet, share or like on social media.

You have the right to freedom of expression, but that right may not unjustifiably infringe on the rights of others, e.g. someone else's right to a good reputation, dignity or privacy.

6. ENFORCEMENT OF THIS POLICY

- 6.1 The terms of this policy shall have the force of a contractual agreement between Curro, its employees, learners (duly assisted by their parents/guardians) and parents/guardians.
- 6.2 This policy shall be enforced by those parties chosen by Curro to do so.
- 6.3 If disciplinary proceedings are appropriate, they will be conducted in terms of the disciplinary procedures in force at Curro at the time.

7. HELPFUL TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS WHEN ENGAGING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The above instructions clarify what may be and what may not be said on social media, but Curro wants users to get the full benefit of social media and has therefore compiled a list of guidelines to assist users to get the best from social media without getting into trouble.

7.1 Think before you post

- 7.1.1 The speed of being able to publish your thoughts at the click of a button is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. Remember that the Internet never forgets. What you publish will be around for a long time, so you need to reflect on and edit your content carefully.

If in doubt about a post or if something does not feel right:

- Let it sit for a while and reconsider it at a later time.
- Ask someone's advice.
- Simply don't post it!

- 7.1.2 Take personal responsibility for your actions and words on social media.

7.2 Be yourself

- 7.2.1 Be interesting and have fun, but stay out of trouble.
- 7.2.2 Write about what you know. You may find yourself embarrassed by an expert if you comment on topics that you are not properly informed about.

7.3 Take the time to do things properly

Quality matters. Use spell checker. If you are not design-orientated, ask someone who is whether your blog looks decent and take their advice on how to improve it.

7.4 Protect your privacy

7.4.1 Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see. There is no such thing as “privacy” on social media.

7.4.2 Be cautious about disclosing personal details online.

7.4.3 Change your passwords frequently.

7.4.4 Never click on any links that seem untrustworthy. If a friend sends you something via private message, rather confirm with them that the link is safe.

7.5 Be upfront and honest

Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.

7.6 Respect the intellectual property of others

7.6.1 Pictures, words, videos, logos and music are protected in terms of intellectual property laws. Just because material is freely available online, it does not mean that you may use it without permission.

7.6.2 You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else’s work and always attribute such work to the original author/source.

7.6.3 It is good general practice to link to others’ work rather than reproduce it.

7.7 Be respectful of others

7.7.1 If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party.

7.7.2 Avoid arguments. Do not try to settle scores or provoke others into inflammatory debates.

7.8 Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

- 7.8.1 If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.
- 7.8.2 If someone accuses you of posting something improper, such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them, delete the content immediately and apologise. Legal disputes are expensive and it is rarely worth the fight.

The best advice that we can give is to learn and have fun on social media, but do so responsibly. Ultimately approach social media as you would the “real world”: use sound judgement and common sense and act with integrity. Most importantly always remember that you are an ambassador for Curro and specifically your school – whether you’re on social media or not – and your conduct on and offline has the potential to cause damage to the reputation of not only Curro and its employees, other learners and parents/guardians, but perhaps even more significantly, yourself.