

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies would like to acknowledge both the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung, and Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we are located in Melbourne. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal language groups across all of Victoria, whose lands we provide funding for specific projects around Early Childhood Education. We acknowledge their history, their people, and their stories. As an Association we will work together for reconciliation, a process that starts with the acknowledgement of true Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures of Australia, and will always value the contribution to our community and culture, the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families, communities and their stories.

Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Social media provides opportunities to build communities and to encourage dialogue through the exploration and consideration of diverse thoughts and views. AGECS embraces the use of social media by Council members, members, contractors and affiliates to connect with each other and a broader community of early childhood educators, researchers and supporters as an important tool of community engagement.

With the rapid growth and application of social media, AGECS recognises the need to have a policy and guidelines, which ensure that those who use social media as part of their association with AGECS have guidance on the Association's expectations where social media are used.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline standards for use of social media including the AGECS Facebook page, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts.

3. Scope

This policy applies to Council members and members of AGECS. This policy also applies to affiliates, which include: graduates; contractors; consultants, ambassadors; or any other persons who participate in social media and who may be identified as having an association with AGECS.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, 'social media' are online social networks used to disseminate information through online interaction. These include sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.

Use of social media by AGECS Council and committee members, contractors and ambassadors can be split into two categories: official use and unofficial use.

Official use means use by persons authorised as AGECS spokespersons and representatives for official purposes who are permitted to post content within the approved scope on external social media channels.

Unofficial use of social media falls into two categories: professional or private.

Professional use is when a Council or committee member, contractor, consultant or ambassador is a subject matter expert in a field that may relate to their AGECS involvement and uses social media to comment in that capacity. For example, an AGECS Council or committee member or contractor who is active in the ECEC sector might use social media to discuss issues on an ECEC forum in their own time.

Private use means use of social media in any other capacity. For example, mentioning AGECS from a private social media account.

5. Policy

The following principles apply to the use of social media for AGECS Council members, members, contractors and ambassadors:

- a) Show respect for human dignity and adhere to AGECS mission and values;
- b) Do not use social media to bring AGECS into disrepute;
- c) Do not imply AGECS endorsement of personal views;
- d) Ensure confidentiality of information obtained through AGECS is maintained;
- e) Do not defame individuals or organisations; and
- f) Ensure social media use does not compromise the effectiveness of AGECS activities.

AGECS has a Facebook page which is for the sole purpose of Early Childhood professionals engaging in sector relevant discourse and for advertising upcoming AGECS events and information. The conversations that happen on Facebook should reflect quality standards in Early Childhood. The AGECS Council presents issues and information that represent Early Childhood content and challenge or inspire Early Childhood professionals to continually reflect on their programming, on their relationships with children, families and the community and value play that is responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities.

We want people to feel safe when using AGECS Facebook page and other social media and encourage respectful behaviour. While a Facebook 'page' is different to a 'group' and less likely to involve conversations there may at times be opinions expressed. This means that you may encounter opinions that are different from yours, which we believe can lead to further conversations. However, AGECS may remove certain kinds of sensitive content that is disrespectful to the Early Childhood community. We may take action any time something violates the AGECS Facebook standards. These standards also align with the Early Years Learning Framework including that the AGECS Facebook page will promote positive learning outcomes for children's development and demonstrate respect to the Early Childhood profession, co-workers, families and community.

When using AGECS's social media, Council members, AGECS committee members, contractors, consultants and ambassadors will not:

- a) Post any material that
 - a. Is unlawful, threatening, defamatory, pornographic, inflammatory, menacing or offensive;
 - b. Infringes or breaches another person's rights (including intellectual property rights) or privacy, or misuses AGECS or another person's confidential information (e.g., do not submit confidential information relating to our members, personal information of Council members, or information concerning AGECS business operations that have not been made public);
 - c. Is materially damaging or could be materially damaging to AGECS's reputation or image, or another individual; or
 - d. Is in breach of any of AGECS's policies or procedures.
- b) Breaches AGECS's values which are embedded in the Principles, Aims and Objectives.
- c) Use social media to send unsolicited commercial electronic messages, or solicit other users to buy or sell products or services or donate money.
- d) Impersonate another person or entity (e.g., by pretending to be someone else or another Council member or other participant when you submit a contribution to social media).
- e) Tamper with, hinder the operation of, or make unauthorised changes to the social media sites.
- f) Knowingly transmit any virus or other disabling feature to or via AGECS's social media accounts, or use in any email to a third party, or the social media site.
- g) Attempt to do or permit another person to do any of these things:
 - a. Claim or imply that you are speaking on behalf of AGECS, unless you are authorised to do so; or
 - b. Disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to AGECS.
- h) Be defamatory, harassing or in violation of any other applicable law.
- i) Include confidential or copyrighted information (e.g., music, videos, text belonging to third parties).
- j) Violate any other applicable policy of AGECS.

6. Monitoring social media sites

AGECS will appoint a Council member and a nominated contractor (usually the Engagement Coordinator) as social media officers responsible for managing and monitoring AGECS's social media accounts. All posts on AGECS's social media sites must be approved by both nominated persons unless Council approves the Engagement Coordinator as its delegate. Council can reserve the right to remove any content at its own discretion.

AGECS's social media channels are part of our customer service and will be regularly monitored and updated by the Social Media Officers.

7. AGECS website content

Most resources are to be uploaded to 'Members Only' sections. After two years, 'Members Only' resources can be moved to public resources and then archived after five years. This would ensure resources are current, be an incentive to join AGECS (as members get the newest content) and still

make all content accessible for free eventually. Select resources such as time-sensitive resources will be uploaded immediately to the 'public' section.

If people who register for events want to view the recorded information, they would have to join AGECS.

Podcasts will be created for early childhood professionals including non-members. AGECS will then have its own series of audios that educators can download and receive alerts when each one occurs.

8. Compliance with this policy

AGECS expects that Council members, AGECS committee members, contractors, consultants and ambassadors who contribute to social media will familiarise themselves with this policy and related guidelines, and will act responsibly in reference to AGECS in their social media and online activities.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other AGECS policies.

Breach of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the AGECS Code of Conduct, and may lead to disciplinary action. Where inappropriate use under the policy constitutes a breach of any law, action may also be taken in accordance with that law by AGECS or concerned third parties.

If the Council as a reason to believe that a person subject to the policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances.

If it is found that a Council Member, AGECS committee member, contractor, consultant or ambassador has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they must notify the Council, or the President.

For questions about this policy please contact the President.

Version	3	Approved by Council on	4 th December 2023
Responsible person	The President	Scheduled review date	December 2026