



Story Factory Social media and online engagement policy

PURPOSE

This policy exists to guarantee safe interactions on social media and online for Story Factory students, staff and volunteers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Story Factory staff and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

The term *social media platforms* relates to but isn't limited to Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and Snapchat.

The term *messengers* relates to but isn't limited to Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, Zoom, Google chat.

Inappropriate behaviour can include but is not limited to: cyberbullying, sharing of inappropriate and offensive content, image-based abuse, sexting, using inappropriate and abusive language, stalking, intimidation, encouraging suicide, grooming or sexualising children, developing non-professional relationships with children, unwanted online contact, engaging with children outside of work hours, misuse of a student's personal information - breach of privacy and confidentiality.

POLICY

The purpose of online communication between Story Factory staff and students is:

- To engage new students for Story Factory programs
- To support students enrolled in open programs
- To build a community of writers

All rules that apply offline will apply online. What is inappropriate conduct in a classroom will be deemed inappropriate content online.

All mandatory reporting requirements that apply to offline interactions with students apply to online engagements.

Story Factory staff should never engage in online activities or communication with Story Factory students,

volunteers or other staff members in a way that could be interpreted as inappropriate behaviour as listed in Definitions.

Story Factory staff should never use personal phone numbers, personal social media accounts, personal messengers and personal email to communicate with Story Factory students. There should be a clear distinction between personal and work social media accounts.

All high school students who enrol in open programs should receive a copy of the Story Factory Charter of Rights and boundaries listed in the Code of Conduct. These documents outline student rights and procedures for making complaints.

Story Factory staff can only engage in online communication with high school students who are enrolled in open programs, such as Novella and Poetry, or to respond to enquiries about enrolling in such programs, via official Story Factory channels of communication defined below.

Students enrolled in open programs can be engaged in online communication by storytellers or appropriate administrative staff via official Story Factory emails or Google Docs under the condition that at least one other Story Factory staff is included in the emails or given access to Google Docs.

The Story Factory info@storyfactory.org.au email should be included in all email conversations between Story Factory staff and students. If multiple students are emailed at the same time they should be Bcc-ed so that individual email addresses stay private.

Parents or guardians of students should be included in online communication between Story Factory staff and students should they wish to be. When students enrol in open programs, parents will be asked if they want to be Cc-ed into all communications with students.

Where a student sends an email to a Story Factory staff and does not include another Story Factory staff or info@storyfactory.org.au email, the Story Factory staff should include these in the response.

All official Story Factory social media accounts should be approved by the Story Factory executive director.

At least two Story Factory staff should have administrative access to all official social media accounts.

Official Story Factory social media accounts can be used to communicate with young people who are over 13 years of age for the purpose of encouraging them to sign up to Story Factory open programs, inform them about similar opportunities and develop a community of writers.

Information provided by young people online should not be used against them, nor should it be shared with others who may use it against them. For example, Story Factory staff should not trawl through student social media accounts and share personal information and other content revealed on these feeds.

Photographs and videos of Story Factory students, from which they could be easily identified, should only be published on official Story Factory social media accounts. It is essential that permission to publish is obtained from parents/guardians before such images are used online.

Story Factory students and their parents/guardians, as well as former students, are allowed to change their mind and request that Story Factory removes their images from online platforms even if they granted prior approval to publish.

Online communication with students must never be deleted unless it contains inappropriate language, content or abuse, in which instance the below procedure for capturing of evidence before removal should be followed.

PROCEDURE

Story Factory staff who have concerns for a student's safety and wellbeing as a result of online activities or communication should complete a [NSW Mandatory Reporting Guide](#) the same way it is done when similar concerns come up in workshops. Volunteers must inform their Storyteller, however they may also complete the Reporting Guide if they would prefer to.

If the child is in immediate danger, Story Factory staff should call Triple Zero (000). This could relate to but is not limited to risk of suicide, domestic or other forms of violence.

If a student tries to send a direct message to a personal social media account of a Story Factory staff or volunteer, the staff or volunteer should reject the conversation and remind the student of the Story Factory policy in the next workshop.

If a student leaves a comment under a post or on the wall of a Story Factory staff's or volunteer's personal social media account, the staff or volunteer should not respond to it.

If a student, volunteer or staff engages in online activities or communication that could be deemed as inappropriate behaviour as listed in Definitions, the other staff should take a screenshot of the incident and report it to the directors.

If a student or volunteer shares an inappropriate image or performs an inappropriate act in a live session via Zoom, Google Hangouts or another video platform, the Story Factory host should immediately mute or remove the student from the live meeting. Future participation of that student or volunteer will be assessed by the Story Factory child safety committee.

If students, volunteers or staff members share content that includes nude or/and sexual abuse images of children, the content should NOT be shared under any circumstances. It is a crime to forward such content to a third party, even for the purposes of reporting it.

If this content is public and accessible by others, evidence needs to be collected before it is removed. Evidence of any photos or videos that have been posted online can be saved by taking screenshots or photos of the content. The staff or volunteer should also save or record evidence of the webpage addresses (URLs) or social media services where the photos or images have been shared. If possible, the staff should record the time and date the content was shared, including any other information that may be important. This might include the username/s of the person or people who shared the material.

The staff or volunteer should then inform the Story Factory executive director who will support them to report the abuse to the [eSafety Commissioner](#) and NSW Police.

If any staff are psychologically impacted by any of the content or exchanges that happen in the online space in work-related communication, they will be entitled to one-to-one counselling organised by Story Factory. The same will be extended to students and volunteers where appropriate. This decision will be made by the Executive Director.

If an allegation is substantiated the organisation will take appropriate action. If any staff are found to have breached this policy they may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or ending of the engagement or relationship with Story Factory. Volunteers who are found to have breached this policy may be subject to instant dismissal, and reporting to any other official reporting to relevant authorities such as the Office of the Children's Guardian or police.