**Advertising and schools**

Director of Marketing and Communications Tony Tranchida answers some frequently asked questions schools have about advertising.

**Announcer:** This is a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Hi, I’m Virginia from the Department of Education. Today, the Department’s Director of Communication and Marketing, Tony Tranchida will answer some questions schools frequently ask about advertising.

Hi Tony, thanks for joining me.

I understand it can be a little confusing for schools to know what they can and can’t do in relation to advertising.

Are there basic guidelines schools should follow?

**Tony Tranchida:** Thanks Virginia, thanks for having me today.

Yes, the department has an adverting procedure which covers both, incoming and going advertising and it provides some general guidance around the roles and responsibilities for departmental authors, looking to undertake advertising. It also provides some advice on accepting advertising so if schools decide to open up their school newsletters, or other vehicles they have to outside suppliers, there’s some guidance around that.

There’s also a lot of information on One Portal around advertising and I encourage Principals and other people in schools to get on One Portal and have a look at that. At the end of the day if Principals or school staff have any questions they can always come to Strategic Communications and Engagement. We’re always happy to provide some advice. Probably the easiest way is to contact us through the media email which most people are familiar with.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And if they are looking for things on One Portal, should they just put ‘advertising’ in the search bar?

**Tony Tranchida:** They can yeah, that should usually bringup the correct link.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Okay, great, thank you.

What is the most commonly asked questions schools have about advertising?

**Tony Tranchida:** Okay, well we often get calls from schools regarding advertising and probably the main one I get is, “Can we I let a business advertise in my school newsletter or on our school signage, electronic signage board or on our fence sometimes?”. So, the simple answer is yes. It’s a local decision, it’s up to the Principal, if he or she wants to make those avenues available to outside organisations to advertise to the school community.

There’s a few things to consider.

The main one, if you do decide to open up to advertising is to make sure that, you’re using a fair and transparent process. That means you treat every supplier that comes through the door looking to advertise in the same way and you’re charging them the same amount of money. The only other thing I think people should be aware of, is there is a list of unacceptable advertising in the current advertising procedure. It covers off things like, you know, like not advertising alcohol, or gambling products so just be aware of that when you’re considering taking advertising from businesses or suppliers.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What do you mean by schools having to have a fair and transparent process regarding advertising?

**Tony Tranchida:** Well I guess what I mean is, if the local plumber comes to the school and wants to advertise in the school’s newsletter, you say yes and then his competitor comes along the following day and wants to advertise as well, you have to be fair and allow that other supplier to advertise as well so there’s no perception that you’re being bias or favouring one business over another.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** How much should schools charge for advertising?

**Tony Tranchida:** It’s really up to the school, there’s no set answer to that I guess, it’s what’s ever fair and reasonable and probably whatever the market will pay I guess. Schools know their communities, they’ve probably got a sense of what would be a fair and reasonable amount to ask to advertise in the newsletter. If they’re asking too much, that will become fairly obvious because people won’t advertise. So, whatever you do decide to charge, it’s important that you just charge everybody the same amount so you are applying that fairly and you’re not seen to be favouring one supplier over another.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Okay, thank you and what about social media, as an example, the school’s Facebook page?

**Tony Tranchida:** Yes Virginia, that’s probably one area where we would advise schools not to allow businesses to advertise on school’s social media pages.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And why do you suggest that?

**Tony Tranchida:** Social Media is a relatively new area, advertising on platforms such as Facebook can be quite tricky. The rules charge quite regularly but from our perspective, I think it’s just cleaner for schools not to have other businesses or suppliers listed on their Facebook page. The potential to, I guess be seen to be endorsing that product or service or business, is a lot higher than in an e-newsletter where it’s quite obvious that the ad is an ad.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** So, for schools, their Facebook page is really an extension of the school community, rather than something that should be used for advertising other businesses.

**Tony Tranchida:** Yeah.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And can politicians advertise at our schools?

**Tony Tranchida:** That’s a good question. We often get asked this by schools and Principals. The short answer is yes but there’s a lot of caveats around it. Politians will often want to put advertising in schools and newsletters and they’ll also look to put signs up on school fences.

There’re rules around political advertising and that’s covered in the advertising procedure, but basically the advertising should be limited to the contact details of local, state and federal members. It must not contain any political messaging or slogans so, I recommend that Principals and other staff have a look at the procedure and read that section of it, because it’s pretty clear. There is also a page on One Portal which has further info about politicians visiting schools.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Are there any other questions you get from schools?

**Tony Tranchida:** Yes, actually one of the other questions we get often is, schools asking whether they should take up opportunities like, Shop-a-Docket, to promote their schools. And again, the answer to this one is probably, it depends on the school’s circumstances. So, in some situations, that type of device is suitable. Often schools are competing with non-state schools in their area. If a non-state school is advertising through that channel then there’s some sense or some logic in being in that channel as well. We often have that question with billboards as well. Non-state schools advertising on billboards, should the state school do that as well? The answer is yes. That’s a possibility, but from our perspective, we think the best way for a school to promote itself is to leverage the good news that is happening and the great things that is happening in the school and using their existing channels like their website, their social, their Facebook, newsletters to promote that good news and get that good news out into the community. We’re happy to help schools with that as well so there’s a Good News inbox if schools have interesting and exciting things that are happening in their school that they want to promote more widely. They’re more than welcome to email that and we’ll do our very best to get that out through the department’s social channels, through our Facebook, as well as through our other channels.

There’s also a new advertising procedure, scheduled to come online, Term 2, this year, 2023. So, I encourage schools to have a look at that procedure. We’ve tried to make it a little bit simpler and more streamlined. We’ve taken some of the content that was previously in the procedure, pulled it out and put it into fact sheets, which hopefully will be a little bit easier for people to navigate.

At the end of the day, strategic comms in central office is here to help schools, and look I encourage school staff to pick up the phone or email us, if they’ve got any questions. We’re always happy to help and we’ll try and get back to you as quickly as possible.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Great, thank you for that.

**Tony Tranchida:** Thanks Virginia.

**Announcer** You have been listening to a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

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