

SISD Social Media Guidelines

Purpose

In January 2015, Socorro ISD committed to the Future Ready District Pledge, which sets out a roadmap to achieve successful personalized digital learning for every student. Part of engaging Team SISD in 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. To this aim, SISD has adopted the following guidelines to provide direction regarding the use of online social media [see DH (Local)(Regulation)].

Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in any form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own decision. Free speech protects individuals who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that school districts can discipline employees if their speech online postings, disrupts school operations.

These guidelines have been created as a resource for employees. When utilizing social media, it is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability. Keep in mind that information produced by SISD employees is a reflection on the entire district and is subject to the district's acceptable use policy. Personal postings, even if marked private, may also be subject to relevant SISD policies and procedures, as well as to relevant local, state and federal laws.

By accessing, creating or contributing to any social media for classroom or district use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before participating in any social media application.

Definitions/What is Social Media?

“Social Media” includes the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily over the internet to share information and resources. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications. These websites not only provide information, but allows for interaction during this informational exchange through user-generated content.

Tools include, but are not limited to:

- Social Networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing sites (YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Pinterest, Reddit, StumbleUpon, Fark, Delicious, etc.)
- Podcasting and Vodcasting
- Blogs (Blogger, WordPress, etc.)
- Wikis (Wikispaces, Google Sites, etc.)

“Technology” includes computers, notebooks, the Internet, telephones, cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, pagers, MP3 players, such as iPod’s, USB drives, wireless access points (routers), or any wireless communication device.

“District Technology” is technology that which is owned or provided by the district.

“Personal Technology” is non-district technology.

“Content Owner” is the individual that creates, manages and posts to any message to a social media site.

Creating an Account

Authorization - District presence on any social media site, including school-related accounts, such as clubs, teams, field trips, course, or other sites associated with the district or a school/department must be authorized by the campus/department principal/director. Any such sites, accounts, or pages existing absent prior authorization will be subject to review, editing, and removal.

General District Sites and Accounts - The district's general social media sites, including the district's Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and SmugMug accounts, will be managed by the Public Relations Department. Duplicate, unofficial sites shall be reported, and investigated.

Advertising - Advertising on general district sites or accounts for third-party events or activities unassociated with official district business is strictly prohibited.

Maintenance and Monitoring Responsibilities

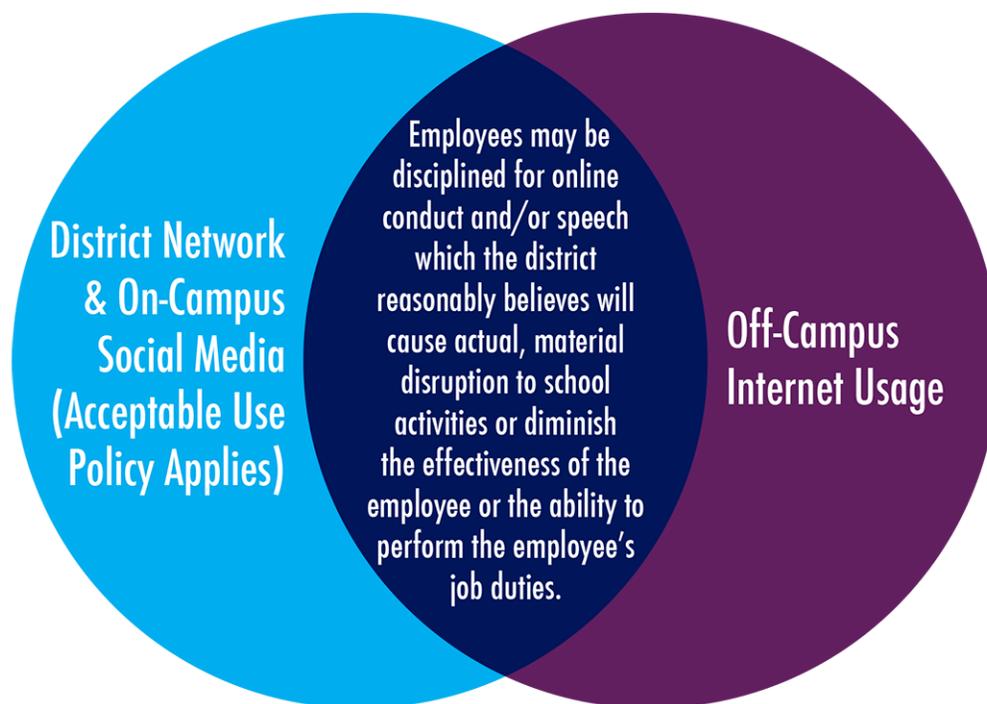
Content Owners are responsible for monitoring and maintaining official presences on district social media sites as follows:

- Content must conform to all applicable state and federal laws, as well as all district and board policies and administrative procedures.
- Content must be kept current and accurate, refreshed at least weekly.
- Content must not violate copyright or intellectual property laws and the content owner must secure the expressed consent of all involved parties for the right to distribute or publish recordings, photos, images, video, text, slideshow presentations, artwork or any other materials. *Before posting any photographs of students, content owners shall review the list of students whose parents have not consented to having their child's photograph taken or published. No student photographs should be published for personal, promotional use or any other non- school related purpose.* It is recommended that content owners request that a second person review all photographs prior to publication. One person may catch issues that the first set of eyes overlooked.
- All postings and comments by users are monitored and responded to as necessary on a regular basis. Postings and comments that are inappropriate, including but not limited to those that are obscene, or vulgar, endorse actions endangering the health of or safety of students, promote the illegal use of controlled substances, violate intellectual property or other rights of another person, contain defamatory statements about others, advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action, are hate literature that attack groups or create hostility, and ultimately would result in material and substantial interference with school activities or the rights of others, should be deleted promptly. (See Policy GKDA [Local].)

Personal Responsibilities

- When using district technology, electronic communication is governed by the district acceptable use policy, which will be enforced accordingly. Users do not have an expectation of privacy in the contents of their personal files on the district's Internet system or other district technology, including email. District technology may only be used for educational purposes. Use for entertainment purposes, such as personal blogging, instant messaging, on-line shopping or gaming is not allowed.

- Use of personal technology/devices may violate the district’s acceptable use policy if the district reasonably believes the conduct or speech will cause actual, material disruption of school activities or diminish a staff member’s effectiveness or ability to perform his or her job duties. While social media can be a powerful communication tool and an educational tool for students and parents, SISD employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online.



DFBB (LOCAL) – Item #20: Any activity, school-connected or otherwise, that, because of publicity given it, or knowledge of it among students, faculty, and community, impairs or diminishes the employee’s effectiveness in the District.

- Although staff members enjoy free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, certain types of communication may relate enough to school to have ramifications for the author or subject at the district site. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. *By virtue of identifying yourself as a SISD employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Use these connections wisely and well. You should also ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at SISD and your role as a public school employee.*
- Staff members are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between their personal social media use and any district-related social media sites. Use an SISD provided e-mail as your e-mail contact for official or school-related pages. Do not use your SISD provided e-mail as a username or e-mail contact for personal pages.
- Socorro ISD encourages district employees with a personal online presence to be mindful of the information they post. Employees’ online behavior should reflect the same professional and personal standards of honesty, respect and consideration that they use face-to-face and in work-related settings. Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community must reflect the professional image applicable to the employee’s position

and not impair the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents/guardians or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children.

- Please note that even if you delete personal information, it still may be stored on the website's server for a longer period of time. Information that is marked "private" rarely is private on the Internet. It is very easy for "friends" to copy and paste information about you and send it or forward it to others, for example. There is no realistic expectation of privacy on the World Wide Web.
- It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the appropriate security settings for any social media (personal or professional) that you may use. Be sure that the settings are such that any personal content may only be viewed by your intended audience. Be aware that, even if your privacy settings are set properly, it is still possible for anyone who you've allowed to see your profile to copy and paste text and send it to someone else. It is also easy for others to "tag" or identify you in photos that they publish with or without your knowledge and permission. Similarly, if you enable settings such as Facebook's ability to allow "friends of friends" to view your content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.

Please remember that all SISD policies and procedures, as well as relevant local, state and federal laws (copyright, fair use, Family Education Right to Privacy Act, personnel statutes, criminal statutes, etc.) apply to social media communications.

Because online content can be spread in mere seconds to a mass audience, the district encourages employees to ask themselves before posting any information online whether they would be comfortable having this information printed in the newspaper alongside their photo. If you would not bring it into the classroom, do not post it online!

Staff-Student/Parent Relations

- Teachers who use social networking to interact with students and/or parents in an educational manner or as a communication tool must find ways to interact without giving students and parents access to their personal information and posts. Many social network sites allow you to create "groups" or "pages" where you can interact with students without giving them access to your personal account. When contributing online do not post confidential student information. Do not post pictures of any students on your personal sites.
- It is inappropriate to use e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging or social networking sites to discuss with a student a matter that does not pertain to school-related activities. Appropriate discussions would include the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club or other school-sponsored activity. One on one electronic communications with students should be avoided except where the communication is clearly school-related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, e-mailing a message about a student's grades).
- Employees should not have online interactions with students on social networking sites outside of those forums dedicated to academic use. District employees' social networking profiles should not be linked to district students' online profiles. Additionally, district employees should use appropriate discretion when using social networks for personal communications and should limit this activity to off-duty hours and the use of their own electronic communication devices.
- When in doubt about contacting a district student during off-duty hours using either district-owned communication devices, network services, and Internet access route or those of the employee,

begin by contacting the student's parent(s) or legal guardian through their district registered phone number. District employees should only contact district students for educational purposes and must never disclose confidential information possessed by the employee by virtue of his or her district employment.

- Engaging in personal social-networking friendships on Twitter, Facebook or other social networking sites is prohibited with students, and strongly discouraged with parents or guardians of students. The district recognizes that because of the tight-knit community of SISD, many staff members may have students or parents of students that are family members or close personal friends. However, the district cautions staff members against engaging in such social-networking friendships with these individuals. Use your official, school- or work-related page(s) instead. A recommendation for staff to respond to "friend" requests on their personal pages is:

If you are a student or parent requesting to be my "friend," please do not be surprised or offended if I ignore your request. As an employee of The Socorro Independent School District, district procedures and practices discourage me from "friending" students or parents on my personal pages. I would encourage you to friend our school's (and/or classroom's, department's, the Socorro Independent School District Facebook pages, etc.)

In summary: Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to: employees fraternizing or communicating with students as if employees and students were peers such as writing personal letters or e-mails; personally texting or calling students, or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework, class work, or other school-related business; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students to do the same (other than professional counseling by a school counselor); and engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the Internet or in writing.

Employees who post information on Facebook, Twitter or similar websites that include inappropriate personal information such as, but not limited to: provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, abuse of alcohol and/or use of drugs, must understand that if students, parents or other employees obtain access to such information and report this to the district, their report will be investigated by school and district officials.

Overall Guidelines for Using Social Media

The following are suggested general guidelines for using social media whether personally or professionally.

Be Transparent: How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity or misrepresenting your identity. Be honest about who you are, where you work and what you do.

Always a School Employee: The lines between public and private, personal and professional, can easily become blurred in the digital world. Even when you think you are communicating in a "personal" capacity remember that many people will see you as an employee of the district in what you do and say online. If you don't want it on the 10 p.m. news or in the daily newspaper - don't share it online.

School Values: Represent SISD district values. Express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. All communications should be done in good taste. Build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Do not denigrate or insult others including students, staff, administrators, parents or other districts. Any online contributions for school purposes must be in accordance with the appropriate policies, guidelines and relevant laws. Consider carefully what you post through comments and photos. A violation of these policies, guidelines and/or relevant laws could be regarded as a form of professional misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Other Online Activities: Part of the Internet's popularity is its many online diversions. Be careful of gimmicks or games that many websites use to increase web traffic. Examples can include risqué surveys or quizzes. Often comments or information thought to be shared in private are capable of being shared publically. Also, employees may be disciplined for using their online access for non-work-related purposes.

Share your Expertise: Write what you know and be accurate. Add value to the discussion. Post something useful. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. A district's most valuable asset is its staff represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on the school. Speak in the first person with your own voice and perspective.

Respectful and Responsible: Employees, parents, and students reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Be respectful of others' opinions in your posts or comments. You are responsible for the content you post. Do your tags, descriptions and your image portray you and the district in a professional manner?

Own and Correct Mistakes: If you make a mistake, admit the mistake and correct it quickly. Share your error with your principal/director so they can help address the issue effectively. Clearly state if you've corrected a previous post. Even though damage may be done, it is best to admit your mistake and correct it. Apologize if appropriate.

Confidential Information: Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information whether it is internal school discussions or specific information about students or other staff. What you post will be seen by others and will be online for a long time. It can be forwarded or shared in just a few clicks. Do not write about colleagues or students without their expressed permission.

Posting Photos or Movies without Permission: Do not post or tag photos or movies of others without their permission. Do not use photos or movies taken at school without permission. Do not post photos or movies that contain students without parent consent.

Responding to Negative Comments and Criticism: How you respond to negative comments or criticism will say more about you and your character than what you post. When in doubt, it's best not to give it credibility by acknowledging it with a response publicly; perhaps a private response would be more appropriate.

Respond and Post Regularly: To encourage readership, post regularly. Don't post to your blog page and then not post for three weeks. Readers won't have a reason to follow you if they cannot expect new content regularly. Respond to other's posts. Answer questions; thank people even if it's just a few words. Make it a two-way conversation.

Spell Check and Abbreviations: Any online contribution should be well written. What you post will be online for the world to read. Follow writing conventions including proper grammar, capitalization and punctuation. Be cautious about using common abbreviations. While your circle of friends may understand what you are saying, you may have readers from across the world who won't understand. When in doubt, define the abbreviation at least once in a post or include a definitions page on your site.

Copyright and Fair Use: Respect copyright and fair use guidelines. Share what others have said by linking to the source and using embedded content. Be sure to cite your source when quoting. When using a hyperlink, confirm that link goes where it should and that the content is appropriate. Keep in mind that copyright and fair use also apply to music. Do not post presentations or videos using popular music, or any music or art that you have not obtained the appropriate permissions for use. For example, just because you've purchased something for personal use doesn't mean you've purchased the right to broadcast it to others online.

Personal Information: Be careful about sharing too much personal information. People often share personal information such as their pet names, their parents and children's names, where they grew up, and more. This information may help a hacker guess your passwords. If you share that you will be out of town, a criminal may use this to target your home for a burglary. Do not share with a student your personal problems that would normally be discussed with adults. Be smart and don't share too much information.

Video: The Internet is becoming an increasingly popular educational tool and place to share personally created movies. You are responsible for all you do, say, and post online, including video. Anything you post online should represent you in a professional manner as others will see you as connected to the district. Anything you show in your classroom should be previewed by you in its entirety, prior to any student seeing it. Consult a supervisor if you feel the content may be questionable.