



Midlothian ISD Guidelines for Educators Using Social Networking Sites

Social networks are rapidly growing in popularity and use by all ages in society. The most popular social networks are web-based, commercial, and not purposely designed for educational use. They include sites like, but not limited to, Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, and Instagram. For individuals, social networking sites provide tremendous potential opportunities for staying in touch with friends and family.

Educational networking sites are also growing in use. These sites are usually restricted to only certain users and not available to the general public. These include resources such as Moodle, educational wikis, professional online communities or district adoptions of online applications such as Google Apps for Education. If you wish to use networking protocols as a part of the educational process, please work with your administrators and technology staff to identify and use restricted, school-endorsed networking platforms.

One of the hallmarks of social networks is the ability to “friend” others – creating a group of others that share interests and personal news. The district strongly discourages teachers from accepting invitations to friend students within these social networking sites. When students gain access into a teacher’s network of friends and acquaintances and are able to view personal photos, the student-teacher dynamic is altered. Friending students provides more information than one should share in an educational setting. It is important to maintain a professional relationship with students to avoid relationships that could cause bias in the classroom.

For the protection of your professional reputation, the district recommends the following practices:

Friends and Friending

- Do not accept students as friends on personal social networking sites. Decline any student-initiated friend requests.
- Do not initiate friendships with students.
- Remember that people classified as “friends” have the ability to download and share your information with others.

Content (As noted in the Midlothian ISD Acceptable Use Procedures)

1. FERPA: K-5th grade students’ work and photo may be posted and identified using first name and last initial only. 6th-12th grade student work and photographs may be posted with full name identification. No other personal information about a student is allowed, such as e-mail address, home number, or home address. Before posting student information staff must confirm with the campus office to verify if the parent has opted out.
2. System users may not redistribute copyrighted programs or data except with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright laws, District policy, and administrative regulations.
3. System users may not send or post messages or photographs that are abusive, obscene, pornographic, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, bullying, unethical behavior, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal.



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Internet & Digital Citizenship Guidelines

Teachers, administrators, librarians, or counselors may create online communication tools for use in class activities or to provide a resource for other teachers or staff members in the District.

- Teachers will be responsible for maintaining their class or educational online communication tools.
- Teachers' social media accounts must reflect positively upon the district and department and/or school.
- Non-school related personal social media accounts must not be linked in any way to the MISD's school web pages or to those used with students.
- Teacher Canvas and/or any web page should reflect instructional goals; clearly demonstrating the connections to educational projects, activities or goals.
- Lead students through the Digital Citizenship lesson aligned with AUP guidelines and best practices for utilizing technology. Each campus has an implementation plan teachers shall follow.
- If a student is developing a student webpage, blog or other web 2.0 tool, teachers will instruct students to include the following notice: *"This is a student web page. Opinions expressed on this page shall not be attributed to Midlothian ISD."*
- Teachers that create web learning environments should monitor their students' activities to ensure compliance with the student Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) as published in the Code of Conduct.
- If students will be interacting with web learning tools in any way, the teacher must first refer to the district FERPA and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) forms for verification of student and/or parent signatures.
- Any social media or electronic communication between staff and students **will include the staff members supervisor..**