



EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS

Inspiring each student every day

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

UPDATED SPRING 2022

**Consult with the Communications and Community Relations office
for further guidance as needed: Communications@edenpr.org or 952-975-7150**



OVERVIEW

Eden Prairie Schools knows that online communication has changed the way we interact, teach, communicate and share content. Staff are expected to navigate the appropriate use of electronic communication tools in their professional and personal lives. It is vital staff maintain professionalism in their interactions with students and the community. Failure to do so could put you in violation of existing district policy and at risk of disciplinary action.

GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM/ EDUCATIONAL USE

Online tools can add great value to classroom instruction and communication with families. They can also be helpful to activities and athletics groups for sharing information.

Online, or electronic, communication, includes any form of online publication where users create and post content, or engage in conversation with others. They include social media, text messaging, blogs, wikis, podcasts, virtual worlds, email, mobile apps, videos, etc.

Employees are encouraged to use online tools in order to address an educational goal for their classroom. Employees are responsible for monitoring content and addressing inappropriate behavior or activity.

- 1/** Employees should always consider first the tools that are operated by the district (district email, district Google accounts, Schoology, district websites, etc.)
- 2/** When using online platforms not controlled by the district for classroom use, inform your supervisor (or designee) and alert parents/guardians annually of its use and educational purpose.
- 3/** Use district contact information (email, address, phone, etc.) for creating and maintaining accounts, including student accounts.
- 4/** Abide by the user guidelines set by the host or provider of the social media or online tool.
- 5/** Review privacy settings: They should be as restrictive as possible while also ensuring that communication and content reaches your intended audience.
- 6/** Use the platform regularly - check in, reply to posts, etc. You now manage an online community.
- 7/** Be sure there is a record of your communication in the online platform, and know how to access it. You may be asked for this record.

These guidelines will evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge.

GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL USE

1/ **Disclose Your Identity**

The lines between personal and professional are sometimes blurred in the digital world. Even when you have a disclaimer or use a different username, you will always be considered to be an Eden Prairie Schools employee. If you are posting about your work, use your real name and identify your employment with the district.

2/ **Protect Private Information & Student Safety**

Do not share confidential information about students and staff such as internal school discussions, grades, attendance, personal records, etc. What you post will be seen by others and can be forwarded or shared in just a few clicks. Even your private page can be hacked by astute criminals.

Students, parents, and colleagues should not be identified personally without their approval. For example, ask permission before posting someone's picture in a social network (student photos require parent/guardian consent). Private data about students or other employees should never be shared online.

3/ **Be Professional**

School district employees have a responsibility to maintain appropriate relationships with students and parents/guardians, whether on or off duty. The integration of social media into our daily lives and routines mixes the personal with the professional. Both case law and public expectations hold educational employees to a higher standard of conduct than the general public. Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner and consider carefully what you post through comments and images. Respect copyright and fair use guidelines.

Anything posted online can be distributed widely. So consider that your online communication could be read by Eden Prairie Schools families, colleagues, administration, or the School Board.

4/ **Be Respectful**

Respect your audience and your coworkers. Do not, under any circumstance, post offensive comments about students, colleagues, or the district in general. Ideas and opinions should be constructive and shared in a respectful manner.

Do not denigrate or insult others, including other schools or competitors. Remember that our communities reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also consideration of unintended consequences. Different people will have different ideas of what is considered private, objectionable or inflammatory. Know how to report or block content that is offensive or harassing.

Be aware that when posting text-only comments, it can be difficult for a reader to discern your nuance, sarcasm or humor. A well-intended joke can fall flat or may appear offensive.

Be smart about linking to content posted or developed by others: Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its message.

5/ **Bring Value**

Social media and electronic communication will more likely pay dividends for you if you add value to your followers, readers, fans, and users. Communication associated with Eden Prairie Schools should engage fellow educators, parents, community members, students, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand education better, then it's adding value.

Off-topic comments and or remarks that do not add something to the conversation are best left unposted.

6/ **Productivity Matters**

You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job. Remember that district technologies are provided for educational use.