



Social Media Guidelines for Employees of SAU 70, Dresden, Hanover, and Norwich School Districts

September 2022

Introduction

The SAU 70 School District, and its associated districts, recognize the importance of ongoing dialog between the Districts and its stakeholders. Today's stakeholders are deeply engaged in electronic forms of communication, and many educators have turned to email, websites, blogs, text messaging, and social media to communicate with both students and parents. Although the SAU 70 District encourages the use of electronic media for communicating, employees must use caution and always exercise the utmost professionalism. The use of social media can easily blur the lines between professional and personal entities.

In addition to the professional standards practiced each day during interactions with students in a face-to-face environment, there are also professional standards and expectations that must be upheld online. Although electronic means of communications are dynamic, mobile, and quickly reach their audience, they may, in some circumstances, not meet the public and professional standards for communicating with students and parents. It is crucial to keep in mind that information produced by district employees in the context of their work is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to the district's policy GBEF1 - Staff Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Protocol.

Employees of the SAU 70 School District have a responsibility to the school system, colleagues, and students to depict a level of professionalism in all communications. Employees are role models for students and are viewed as leaders within our community. Please always remember that the district's standards of behavior are high.

SAU 70 School District has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for employees who choose to utilize electronic forms of communication. These guidelines offer professional recommendations and best practices for communicating via electronic media. The guide is intended to assist employees in using digital tools in a professional, safe, and responsible manner.

Professional Use of Social Media

Employees administering a District sanctioned social media account on behalf of the district class, team, club, group, department, organization or school, or the district are expected to:

- Provide the district office and/or principal with login credentials and administrator rights to the account.
- Naming convention must be person's name/team/club – School Name (Title if person)
Examples –
Hanover High School - Varsity Soccer –
RMS Science teacher - Teacher A
- Only school email accounts should be used when creating a District approved social media account.

- Post only things that directly relate to the class, team, club, group, department or building, or to the school district. Employees should not promote outside organizations on district social media accounts unless there is a direct relationship to the district.
- Respect state and federal trademark, copyright and fair use laws when posting to social media, and uphold standards of web accessibility to the highest extent practicable.
- Monitor comments posted to social media pages on a regular basis. It is suggested all comments – both negative and positive be reviewed within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours on the weekend, based on the [SAU 70 Social Media](#) guidance. If the platform allows it, comments should be approved before going live.
- Follow the District's policy GBEP1 - Staff Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Protocol and restrict the use of district computers and other technology for educational purposes only.
- Post information that is factually accurate and free of grammatical or spelling errors.
- Take responsibility for anything "liked" or shared via social media when representing the district, as this can be construed as an endorsement. Do not share a link without fully reading it first.
- Only follow other SAU 70 District accounts, unless approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- Adhere to all terms and conditions of individual social media sites or electronic messaging applications.
- During a crisis situation, you as a SAU 70 District staff member are strongly discouraged from using social media to make a statement. Posting a personal statement or opinion on social media regarding a district-related topic should be avoided. A formal press release will be created by the Superintendent. Depending on the situation, a social media post may also be shared by the Superintendent's office.
- Before posting make sure you have read and are familiar with New Hampshire Code of Ethics for Educational Professionals for New Hampshire Educators and SAU 70 policy GBEP.

Personal Use of Social Media

When interacting with others on social media, employees are expected to follow the same behavioral standards they would in other communications. Employees are reminded of the following:

- A personal social media account is not an appropriate venue to interact with students, parents or guardians.
- Personal email accounts should be used for personal social media accounts.
- Confidential information (including, but not limited to, student addresses and telephone numbers) should never be posted or solicited online.
- Employees are expected to refrain from reporting, speculating, discussing or giving any opinions on district topics or individuals that could be considered sensitive, confidential or disparaging.
- If you identify yourself as a SAU 70 School District staff member online, it should be clear that the views you express are not necessarily those of the district.
- Policy GBEP1 - Staff Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Protocol do not allow the use of student photographs or likenesses, information and classwork to be used on staff members personal social media or other online publications or venues.

- Before posting make sure you have read and are familiar with New Hampshire Code of Ethics for Educational Professionals for New Hampshire Educators and SAU 70 policy GBEB.
- Think before you post – regardless of your privacy settings, assume anything you post is public information. Don't post anything you wouldn't feel comfortable saying publicly.

Social Media Guidelines

Always a School Employee

The lines between public and private, personal and professional, are blurred in the digital world. Regardless of whether it is clearly communicated, you will be identified as an employee of the school district in what you do and say online. If you don't want it on the 6 o'clock news, don't share it online.

School Values

Always represent school district values. Express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Consider carefully what you post through comments and photos. A violation of these guidelines could be regarded as a form of professional misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Manage Relationships Carefully

Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Do not fraternize with students as though they are your peers or friends.

Building Community/Positively Represent School

Represent the school district and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about students or colleagues (including administrators) or the district in general. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. Do not comment on or forward unsupported information (rumors). You are responsible for what you post, even if it's on a personal page, so be certain it's accurate and supports your organization.

Own and Correct Mistakes

If you make a mistake, admit the mistake and correct it quickly. Share your error with your supervisor, and the communications specialist so they can help address the issue effectively. Even though damage may be done, it is best to admit your mistake and correct it.

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 can be forwarded or shared in just a few clicks.

Spell Check and Abbreviations

Follow writing conventions including proper grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Be cautious about using abbreviations, acronyms, and jargon. When in doubt, define the abbreviation at least once in a post or include a definitions page on your site.

As a staff member, it's your responsibility to be aware of the policies that impact social media.

SAU 70 Policies and Guidelines for Data and Security

- [EHAA - Computer Security, Email, and Internet Communications](#)
- [EHAB - Data Governance and Security](#)
- [EHB-R-2 - Email/Electronic Communication](#)
- [GBEB - Staff Conduct](#)
- [GBEF - School District Internet Access for Staff](#)
- [GBEF1 - Staff Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Protocol](#)
- [JRA - Student Education Records Information - FERPA](#)