



SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK

A set of guidelines to assist USD 470 employees in making decisions about the professional and personal use of social media.

ARKANSAS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

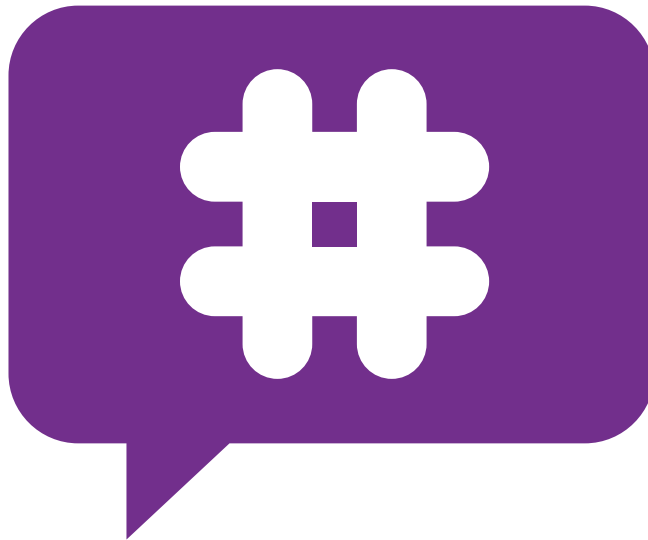


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SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION TOOL

USD 470 recognizes the growing importance of social media, including its role in public education. Social media networks also have great potential to connect employees, students, parents and community to the important work taking place within our schools. At the same time, the District recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies.

To assist USD 470 employees in using social media to enhance student learning and promote two-way communication, the district will provide to its employees information on appropriate and effective use of social media. Professional communication includes any message or content delivered as part of instructional, curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular work.

In social media interactions with colleagues, students, parents, and community members, employees must observe the same level of personal responsibility, discretion, and professionalism expected in any other form of communication. Social media activities must comply with the Board policy and all applicable laws including, but not limited to, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, copyright, defamation, privacy, and any criminal laws regulating conduct between adults and minors. Violating Board policy and/or law may result in disciplinary action.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PRIVATE USE BY EMPLOYEES

To assist employees in making decisions regarding private use of social media, USD 470 will provide a set of guidelines.

In social media interactions with colleagues, students, parents, and community members, employees should observe the same level of personal responsibility, discretion, and professionalism expected in any other form of communication. While decisions regarding private use of social media are made by the individual and the right to do so is respected by the district, inappropriate social media use which negatively impacts the employee's ability to carry out their professional responsibilities may result in disciplinary action.



USD 470 SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

At Arkansas City Public Schools, we recognize that many of our staff, students, parents, and community members are active social media users. As a school district, we are also incorporating social media as a strategic tool for communication, teaching, and learning. The purpose of these guidelines is to help you to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation, and the reputation of USD 470, and that respects the relationship between teachers and students.

For the purposes of this document, social media includes, but is not necessarily limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, TikTok, YouTube, and others, as well as any of the functions within these platforms. It also includes blogs, comments on websites, discussion forums, and any other activity online involving connecting or communicating with other users. These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, cell phones, e-mail and the Internet.

PROFESSIONAL USE

If you are considering creating a social media site to represent the school/district, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why do you want to be engaged in a social media platform?
- What information do you need to share and is this the most effective platform for which to share that information?
- Do you have the capacity to maintain the social media platform in a timely manner?
- Who will do the work?

If you feel confident that your answers create a case for the use of social media for school/district business, you may move forward. Contact the USD 470 Communications Department for assistance in establishing a proper site in the most effective way. If you are not sure of your responses to the questions above, please contact the communications department for assistance.

USD 470 Communications Department

620-441-2000

info@usd470.com

- Social media sites used on behalf of USD 470, its schools, classes, teams, clubs and other district-related groups should be made known to the communications department and should have an administrator and/or the communications director as an administrator of that social media site.
- Be clear about what is and isn't acceptable activity on your social media site. If you need assistance with creating a disclaimer or comment policy, contact the communications department.
- Social media sites should supplement, not replace, traditional classroom and parent communication tools.
- Every effort should be made to ensure district/school-related social media sites are appropriate for an educational setting and accessible.
- USD 470 employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online.
- What is inappropriate in the classroom should be considered inappropriate online. Any site that can be accessed by students should be consistent with Board-stated student goals and should not include any inappropriate references or photos that include (but are not limited to) alcohol, tobacco, drug use, hate speech, illegal activity, etc.
- Be aware of and follow FERPA rules. Before posting photos/videos of a student, check their media permissions status in PowerSchool. Also, be mindful of identifying students online.
- Follow all laws including trademark, copyright, defamation, discrimination, and harassment.
- Be accurate. Make sure you have all the facts before you post or answer questions on social media platforms. It's OK to say "I don't know but can find out for you" or to direct questions to the communications department (info@usd470.com).
- Be kind and respectful in all communications on social media platforms. Your interactions with others are a reflection of the school district.

PERSONAL USE

- While online sharing is a personal decision and these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your right to share thoughts/opinions, remember that the information you share online can quickly and easily become public knowledge and can remain publicly accessible for a long time.
- Be aware of the image you are presenting and the professional reputation you are creating. If you wouldn't say it in a public meeting or to a member of the news media, consider whether you should post it online.
- You are personally responsible for the content you publish online or send in a private message. "Content" includes personal comments, links, photographs, audio/video, and content created by other users that you choose to share, send, or re-post.
- Check and adjust your privacy settings to reflect your intentions but remember that privacy does not fully exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes shared and how that may reflect both on you as an individual and as a representative of the school district.
- Use your personal email address on social media platforms and while engaging in other off-duty social media activities.
- Employees should not issue opinions/statements on behalf of the school district unless authorized to do so.
- Respect the privacy and rights of both colleagues and students. Confidential student or personnel information should not be posted online. Photos/videos of students should not be posted on school-related or personal social media sites without prior approval from the parent/guardian.
- Maintain appropriate employee-student relationships.
- Consider your personal policy on "friending" and/or engaging with students on a social media platform. Consider what types of content you and your other contacts might be sharing on that platform that would be accessible to students.
- Follow Board policies and all laws including trademark, copyright, defamation, discrimination, and harassment.
- Online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration expected in face-to-face communication and should be in accordance with the highest professional standards.

