

Guidelines for the Use of Social Media

Updated August, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Fort Mill School District realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to and exploring new methods of communication. To this end, the Fort Mill School District has adopted the following guidelines to provide direction when creating social media accounts for school, classroom, and district use, as well as participating in online social media activities.

These guidelines have been created as a resource for you. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by Fort Mill School District employees and students is a reflection on the entire district. Social media can be a powerful communication tool and educational tool for students and parents. FMSD employees are encouraged to use social media for these purposes. *Social media accounts should not be considered the primary means of communication with parents.*

By accessing, creating or contributing to social media for classroom or district use, or by associating yourself with the district on your personal social media accounts, you agree to abide by these guidelines.

Associating yourself with the district can include but is not limited to:

- Taking photos or videos in the classroom.
- Having school logos or names visible.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Social media tools include, but are not limited to:

- Facebook/Instagram/Threads
- Twitter
- Photo and video sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr)
- Tiktok

TIKTOK

The South Carolina legislature passed a proviso prohibiting TikTok and all ByteDance applications using district devices or resources. Access to the TikTok app has been blocked from district devices and the district network.

1.102. (SDE: ByteDance Ltd. Application Prohibition) No school district or any of its schools, may use any funds appropriated or authorized pursuant to this act or use any devices or agency resources purchased or leased with any funds appropriated or authorized pursuant to this act to access the TikTok application. The prohibition extends to any application with any ownership by ByteDance Ltd., which is the parent company of TikTok.

CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Whether you are creating a social media account for your classroom, a school group, or a booster club, please keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Staff should notify their building principal and receive approval whenever they are considering a new use of social media or digital communication within the classroom.
- When setting up a Facebook account, please follow the directions included at the end of this document.
- Use your Fort Mill School District Gmail account to set up the social media account when possible, and be sure your administrator has the password to any school-related social media accounts. School Administrators are responsible for collecting and communicating social media account information to the Communications Department.
- **If a student club or group requests a social media account, that account must be set up with an employee email address and be supervised by the employee.**
- Personal and professional social media accounts should be SEPARATE.
- We strongly recommend that you make your personal social media private.
- Obtain permission from the Communications Department before using any school or district logo or image. School logos may only be used in a professional capacity. When using social media in a professional manner all images and colors should match the organization's logo or mascot when possible.
- General district sites and accounts - The district's social media sites, including the district's Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts, will be managed by the Communications Department. Duplicate, unofficial sites will be reported and investigated.

FERPA

Before including a student in any type of social media or news announcement, you must check PowerSchool to determine the student's permissions. [Click here to learn how to check FERPA in PowerSchool.](#) If you have questions regarding FERPA compliance, please contact the Communications Department. (Please note: FERPA applies to closed and/or private groups on social media.)

When is FERPA not an issue?

If students are at an event that is not required and/ or is open to the public, the media/others are free to photograph or video the event. (For example, athletic events do not require the school to check students' FERPA permissions.) At events students are required to attend, the school must take precautions so that students who can't be photographed are kept out of photographs or videos taken at the event.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

- As a general rule, your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration as your face-to-face communication. ***Consider your social media presence to be an extension of your classroom or office.***
- Content must conform to all applicable state and federal laws, as well as all district and board policies and administrative procedures.
- Federal law prohibits the promotion of religion in public schools. District-sponsored social media content (which includes school, team, and district accounts) should not promote religious groups or gatherings.
- Content must not violate copyright or intellectual property laws.
- All posts and comments by users should be monitored and responded to as necessary on a regular basis. Posts and comments of an inappropriate nature or containing information unrelated to official or district business should be deleted promptly.
- Any posts and comments should help build and support the school community. Do not comment on nor forward unsupported information, e.g. rumors.
- At no time should students be photographed or videoed without their knowledge.
- Look critically at the subject matter. Does it promote FMSD in a positive light? Is it helpful? Is it truthful? Is it inspiring?
- Be familiar with the platform and understand how "Likes", "Shares", and/or "Retweets" can be seen by followers and the public.
- **The Communications Department of the FMSD would like to help spread the news about exciting events happening in your school or classroom. If you share something on social media that you'd like the FMSD to share with parent's district-wide, tag the district on Instagram @fortmillschooldistrict, or on Facebook at facebook.com/FortMillSchoolDistrict.**

If you have an existing social media site(s), please be sure it conforms to these guidelines ASAP.

YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY – PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

When using social media sites, **if you identify yourself as an employee of the Fort Mill School District, you must remember that you have associated yourself with the district, your colleagues and your school community;** therefore, you must ensure that any associated content is consistent with the mission and work of the district.

You should not be on your personal social media accounts during work hours.

While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to comment upon the workplace, it remains good practice to never post anything that would cause a concern for you or the Fort Mill School District, or would call your professional reputation into question.

Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. Use common sense when posting online. Before you post or share content, ask yourself if you would want to see that content in the newspaper or on the evening news. Would you feel comfortable if your content was read by colleagues, your students, parents, or the School Board?

- Employees may be disciplined for online conduct and/or speech which the district reasonably believes will cause actual, material disruption to school activities.
- Employees should respect the district and the students and parents we serve.
- Employees should respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about students or colleagues (including administrators) nor the district in general. Negative comments about people may amount to cyberbullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offense.
- Regardless of your Privacy Settings on social media platforms, assume that all of the information you have shared is public information. Use good judgement and think before you post.

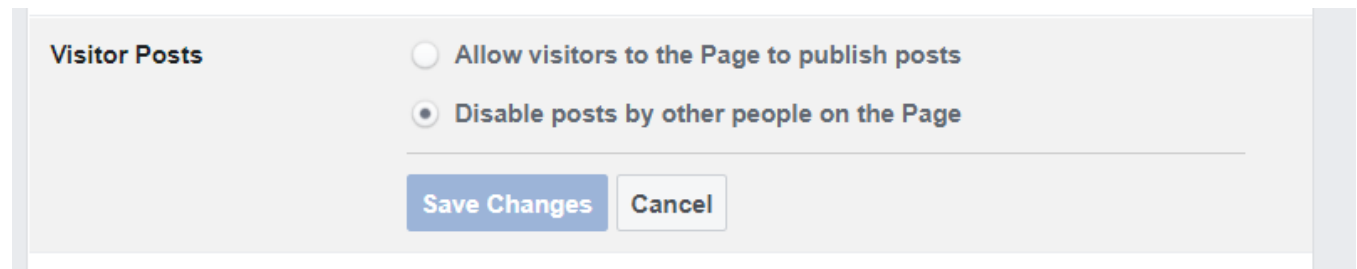
Questions? Email Jenny Overman, Digital Media Specialist at overmanj@fortmillschools.org or call (803) 548 – 8190.

SETTING UP A FACEBOOK PAGE

- Please follow all guidelines listed in the Social Media Guidelines regarding creating a social media account.
- A Facebook Page should be set up using your school or group name, not a nickname. If your school name is unavailable, please contact the Communications Department for guidance.
- Add your Administrative team to the Facebook page as Administrators. This gives your page a layer of protection should you be moved to another school or your account is compromised. Ensure all administrators on the account have thoroughly read the Social Media Guidelines.
- Add Digital Media Specialist Jenny Overman to the account as an administrator. This is another layer of protection for you in case you need assistance.

SETTINGS

Please review the settings below and be sure your page adheres to them. Facebook changes Page Administration frequently. If these screenshots are no longer accurate, reach out to Jenny Overman (overmanj@fortmillschools.org) for updated instructions.

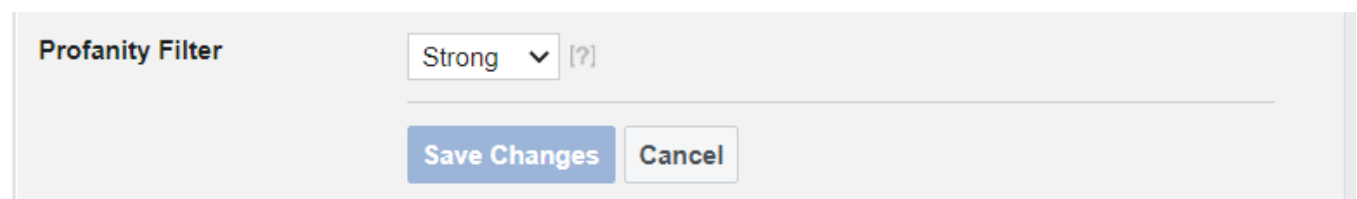


Visitor Posts

Allow visitors to the Page to publish posts

Disable posts by other people on the Page

Save Changes Cancel



Profanity Filter

Strong ▾ [?]

Save Changes Cancel

- Under Templates and Tabs, remove the option for “Reviews.”

GENERAL FACEBOOK GUIDANCE

- Do not delete comments unless they are harassing an employee, parent, or use profanity, etc. Even if the comment is inaccurate or otherwise obnoxious, attempt to correct the poster rather than delete the comment. If you aren't sure whether a post should be deleted, hidden, or left alone, feel free to reach out to Jenny Overman (overmanj@fortmillschools.org) for help making that decision.

If you have questions about social media guidelines, set up, or management, please reach out to Jenny Overman, overmanj@fortmillschools.org.