



**Coldspring-Oakhurst**  
CONSOLIDATED I.S.D.

## COCISD Social Media Guidelines for Staff (Revised June 2021)

Coldspring-Oakhurst Consolidated ISD supports the use of online social media to facilitate District programs, departments and school sites in building a more successful parent, community, student, and employee network. This document contains COCISD's policies and guidelines regarding the use of online social media.

*(See also the COCISD Acceptable Use Policy, and COCISD Board Policies: CQ and DH)*

### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of social media as used by the District is to:

- promote District-wide or school-specific programs, school/staff/student achievements, initiatives, news, information pertinent to District community, etc.;
- direct traffic to the District's website for more information, encouraging involvement and awareness;
- provide accurate, relevant and up-to-date information; and
- to serve as an authenticated source of District news and information for parents, students, staff and community members.

### **B. DEFINITIONS**

**“Social Media”** includes the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily over the internet to share information and resources. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications.

**“Technology”** includes computers, notebooks, the Internet, telephones, cell phones, MP3 players, such as iPods, USB drives, wireless access points (routers), or any wireless communication device.

**“District Technology”** is that which is owned or provided by the district.

**“Personal Technology”** is non-district technology.

## **C. OFFICIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE**

At this time, the active district social media accounts include the following:

- Coldspring-Oakhurst Consolidated Independent School District ([facebook.com/COCISD](https://www.facebook.com/COCISD))
- Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Career & Technical Education ([facebook.com/Cocisdcte](https://www.facebook.com/Cocisdcte))
- Coldspring-Oakhurst Consolidated ISD Police Department ([facebook.com/COCISD.POLICE](https://www.facebook.com/COCISD.POLICE))
- Coldspring-Oakhurst Athletics ([facebook.com/ColdspringTrojansAthletics](https://www.facebook.com/ColdspringTrojansAthletics))
- [Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD YouTube Channel](#)

*Additional social media accounts may be considered as needed in the future. The main District social media accounts are managed by the Public Relations/Communications office.*

## **D. REQUISITE AUTHORIZATION**

### **1. Social Media Account Authorization**

District presence on any social media site, including school-related accounts such as clubs, teams, field trips, courses, or other sites associated with the District or a District school must be authorized by the Superintendent or PR/Communications office. Any sites, accounts, or pages existing absent prior authorization will be subject to review, editing, and removal. As appropriate, a recommendation for disciplinary action may result.

To request permission for a District-related site, complete the COCISD Social Media Authorization Form, including the name of the “content owner,” or individual responsible for performing regular monitoring and maintenance of the website or account, name of the District or school-related organization, and the name of the supervisor who approved the site’s creation.

Please note that for emergency purposes only, each District-affiliated social media account content owner must add the PR/Communications coordinator as an account administrator. However, the content owner shall be responsible for monitoring and maintaining these sites and accounts.

### **2. Professional Responsibility**

All communications through social media should remain professional in nature and be in accordance with the District’s Acceptable Use Guidelines (AUG) as well as District Administrative Procedures.

The below guidelines have been developed for employees who may operate social media sites for marketing and communicating about District programs, services and events. These tools include, but are not limited to:

- Multimedia and social networking websites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)
- Blogs and wikis, such as Wikipedia and any other site where text can be posted.

### **3. Internet/Social Media Postings**

Any postings on social media sites operated by designated District staff **should not:**

- reveal confidential information about the District or its staff or students, including, but not limited to, aspects of District emails, customers, procedures, policy or details of internal discussions;
- include harassing, vulgar, defamatory, threatening or embarrassing remarks to any person or entity;
- include jokes or comments based on an individual's gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, religion or opinion; or
- include information for political purposes (pro/anti), private consulting or commercial practices.

### **4. Communications**

All District social media presences will have a consistent look and feel, including use of the District's logo.

If a member of the news media or a blogger contacts you about an Internet posting that concerns the business of the District, any of its schools, or any District/school staff, administration, board members or students, please refer that person to the Public Relations/Communications Office.

Negative or incorrect postings detected by any District employee about a District department, program, or campus, contact the Public Relations/Communications office.

### **5. Foundation and PTA Sites**

Authorized school websites shall maintain a clear separation from the website of their school foundation or parent-teacher group.

However, a link to the school foundation or parent-teacher group website is permissible. Principals direct certain aspects of foundation and PTA websites, including, but not limited to, directing that District policies regarding fundraisers and fees be properly reflected on the website.

### **6. District Logo**

The use of the District's logo on a social media site must be approved by the Public Relations/Communications Office. The office has logos available upon request.

## **7. Student Photographs**

Photographs or any other personally identifiable student information **should not** be posted by a District social media site content owner without ensuring that the student has a parent permission media consent/FERPA form verifying permissible use of such photos or information on file at the school. Settings on social media sites should be set so that outside posters to any District social media site are unable to upload photos directly to the District's social media site(s).

## **8. General District Sites and Accounts**

The District's general social media sites will be managed, monitored and maintained by the Public Relations/Communications Office. Duplicate, unofficial sites shall be reported, and investigated.

## **9. Sponsors and Advertising**

Sponsor logos are permissible on district-related websites, with the prior approval of the site administrator. The page must also include or link to contact information for an individual who can provide information about sponsorship. Advertising for third-party events or activities unassociated with official district business is strictly prohibited.

## **8. Content Disclaimer**

Any approved District-related social media site shall include the following Rules of Engagement:

Any approved official presence on social media sites outside of those created and monitored by the PR/Communications Office shall include the following text:

“The views expressed on this site do not reflect the views of Coldspring-Oakhurst Consolidated ISD. This site contains user-created content which is not endorsed by the District. The purpose of this site is...” (then specify the purpose).

## **9. Maintenance and Monitoring Responsibilities**

Content Owners are responsible for monitoring and maintaining official presences on social media sites as follows:

1. Content must conform to all applicable state and federal laws, as well as all District and Board policies and administrative procedures.
2. Content must be kept current and accurate, refreshed at least weekly.
3. Content must not violate copyright or intellectual property laws and the content owner must secure the expressed consent of all involved parties for the right to distribute or publish

recordings, photos, images, video, text, slideshow presentations, artwork or any other materials. Before posting any photographs of students, content owners shall review the list of students whose parents have not consented to having their child's photograph taken or published. No student photographs should be published for personal, promotional use or any other non-school related purpose.

*COCISD recommends that content owners request that a second person review all photographs prior to publication. One person may catch issues that the first set of eyes overlooked.*

4. All postings and comments by users must be monitored and responded to as necessary on a regular basis. Account settings regarding postings must be approved by the District. Postings and comments of an inappropriate nature or in violation of the COCISD Social Media Rules of Engagement should be promptly hidden or deleted (in extreme circumstances). Such postings shall be reported, investigated, and authors will be disciplined as appropriate.

## **E. Off-Campus versus On-Campus Social Media and Internet Use Guidelines**

Although staff members enjoy free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, certain types of communication, typically by virtue of their subject-matter connection to campus, may relate enough to school to have ramifications for the author or subject at the District site.

When using District technology, electronic communication is governed by the District Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which will be enforced accordingly. Students and staff should not expect privacy in the contents of their personal files on the District's Internet system or other District technology, including email. District technology may only be used for educational purposes. Use for entertainment purposes, such as personal blogging, instant messaging, on-line shopping or gaming is not allowed. The use of District technology is a privilege, not a right.

Use of personal technology/devices may violate the District's AUP if the District reasonably believes the conduct or speech will cause actual, material disruption of school activities or a staff member's ability to perform his or her job duties. Off-campus internet usage is largely unrelated to school; however, in certain circumstances courts have held that the off-campus online communications may be connected enough to campus to result in either student or staff-member discipline.

## **F. STAFF USE OF PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY**

### **1. Limit On-Duty Use**

Staff members are encouraged to limit their personal technology use during duty hours. Use of Personal Technology for non-District business should be limited to off-duty time and designated breaks.

## **2. Work/Personal Distinction**

Staff members are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between their personal social media use and any District-related social media sites.

## **3. Student Photographs**

Absent parent permission for the particular purpose, staff members may not send, share, or post pictures, text messages, e-mails or other material that personally-identifies district students in electronic or any other form of personal technology. Staff members may not use images of students, e-mails, or other personally identifiable student information for personal gain or profit.

## **4. Professional Effectiveness**

District employees must be mindful that any Internet information is ultimately accessible to the world. To avoid jeopardizing their professional effectiveness, employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the privacy policies, settings, and protections on any social networking websites to which they choose to subscribe and be aware that information posted online, despite privacy protections, is easily and often reported to administrators or exposed to District students.

## **5. Personal Social Networking & Media Accounts**

Before employees create or join an online social network, they should ask themselves whether they would be comfortable if a 'friend' decided to send the information to their students, the students' parents, or their supervisor. Educators must give serious thought to the implications of joining an online social network.

## **6. Responsible Online Identity Monitoring**

Employees are encouraged to monitor their 'online identity,' by performing search engine research on a routine basis in order to prevent their online profiles from being fraudulently compromised or simply to track information posted about them online. Often, if there is unwanted information posted about the employee online, that employee can contact the site administrator in order to request its removal.

## **7. Friending District Students**

Employees should not have online interactions with students on social networking sites outside of those forums dedicated to academic use. District employees' social networking profiles and personal blogs should not be linked to district students' online profiles. Additionally, District employees should use appropriate discretion when using social networks for personal communications and should limit this activity to off-duty hours and the use of their own electronic communication devices.

## **8. Contacting Students Off-Hours**

When in doubt about contacting a District student during off-duty hours using either District-owned communication devices, network services, and Internet access route or those of the employee, begin by contacting the student's parent(s) or legal guardian through their District registered phone number. District employees should only contact District students for educational purposes and must never disclose confidential information possessed by the employee by virtue of his or her District employment.