



INTRODUCTION

York School District One is committed to adapting to and exploring new methods of communication. The following guidelines 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 employees. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information distributed by York School District One 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. *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 for York School District One include, but are not limited to: Facebook/Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

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.

- Employees who would like to create and/or administer a social media account on behalf of a YSD1 class, team, club, group, department, organization or campus, are expected to obtain permission from their administration.
- Use your York School District email 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.
- School and district logos should not be altered in any way without permission from the Public Information Officer.
- General district sites and accounts - The district's social media sites, including the district's Instagram, Facebook and YouTube 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. 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.

What does FERPA protect?

FERPA protects education records, which are defined as records directly related to a student and maintained by the educational institution. These include: Grades and academic transcripts, Class lists and schedules, Discipline records, Student health and financial information, and Student college applications.

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. **T.H.I.N.K** Is it **truthful**? Is it **helpful**? Is it **inspiring**? Is it **necessary**? Is it **kind**. Does it promote YSD1 in a positive light?
- Be familiar with the platform and understand how “Likes”, “Shares”, and/or “Retweets” can be seen by followers and the public.

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

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

When using social media sites, **if you identify yourself as an employee of York School District One, 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 or school 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 York 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.

FOLLOWING/FRIENDING STUDENTS

[ParentSquare is the required platform if you choose to digitally communicate with YSD1 students and families outside of email or Google Classroom](#)

- Do not accept students as friends on personal social networking sites. Decline any student-initiated friend requests.
- Do not initiate friendships with students.
- Remember that people classified as “friends” have the ability to download and share your information with others.
- Do not discuss co-workers or students on social media
- Review and update privacy settings often

If you have questions about social media guidelines, set up, or management, please reach out to Janet Parker, jparker@york.k12.sc.us.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is considered a school or district-related social media account?

An account is school or district-related if it represents a YSD1 classroom, school, team, club, department, organization, booster club or other school-affiliated group. These accounts are considered professional accounts even if an individual employee creates or manages them.

2. I want to create an Instagram or Facebook account for my classroom, team or club. What do I need to do first?

Obtain permission from your school administration before creating the account. When possible, use your YSD1 Outlook account to establish the account, and make sure your administrator has access to the account credentials. For Facebook, be sure you add an administrator as a page administrator as well as Janet Parker (Public Information Officer).

3. Can I create a school-related account using my personal email address?

School-related accounts should be created using a YSD1 employee email address whenever possible. Student clubs or groups must use an employee email address and be supervised by an employee.

4. Can students create or manage an account for a school club?

A student club or group account must be established using an employee email address and supervised by an employee. The employee is responsible for ensuring the account follows district guidelines.

5. What if I am a teacher who creates education-related content on my personal social media account?

Teaching-related content does not automatically make an account an official YSD1 account. However, if you identify yourself as a YSD1 employee, your public content may be associated with the district, your school and your professional role. Personal accounts should not be used to communicate with current students, and personal social media use should not occur during work hours.

7. Can I post content to my personal account during my planning period, lunch or another part of the workday?

The guidelines state that employees should not use personal social media accounts during work hours. Employees who maintain personal or influencer-style accounts should create and post that content outside of their work hours and off school property.

8. Can I film content for my personal social media account at school?

Personal and professional accounts should remain separate. Personal social media content should not be created on school property. When in doubt, contact the Communications Department before creating the content and we will be happy to help you!

9. Can I feature students on my classroom, club or school social media account?

Yes, but you must first check the student's permissions in PowerSchool. FERPA permissions apply to social media, including closed or private groups. Students also should never be photographed or recorded without their knowledge.

10. Does FERPA still apply if my Facebook group or Instagram account is private?

Yes. A private or closed social media group does not eliminate FERPA requirements.

11. Do I need to check FERPA permissions before photographing students at a football game, concert or other public event?

When an event is voluntary, outside of school hours, and open to the public, FERPA does not apply.

12. Can I communicate with students through Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook or another social media platform?

Employees should not communicate with currently enrolled YSD1 students through personal social media. ParentSquare is the required platform for digital communication with students and families outside of district-approved options such as email and Canvas.

13. Can I follow or "friend" a current student from my personal account?

As a general rule, no. The district recommends that employees not friend or communicate with currently enrolled students through personal social media. There may be reasonable exceptions involving relatives, family friends or similar existing relationships.

14. Can I use the York School District One or my school's logo on social media?

Permission from the Communications Department is required before using a school or district logo or image. School logos may only be used professionally and should never be altered without permission from the Public Information Officer.

15. Can a school, department or employee create another general account representing York School District One?

District social media accounts are managed by the Communications Department. Duplicate or unofficial district accounts may be reported and investigated.

16. Can our school or team promote a church event, Bible study or other religious gathering on its social media account?

District-sponsored social media accounts should not promote nor discourage religious groups or gatherings. This applies to district, school, team and other official school-affiliated accounts.

17. Can I share or repost something from another account?

Yes, when appropriate, but remember that shares, reposts, likes and similar interactions may be visible to followers and the public. Before interacting with content from a

professional account, consider whether that interaction appropriately represents your school or the district.

18. What should I do about inappropriate comments on a school social media account?

School-related accounts should be monitored regularly. Inappropriate comments (including profanity, disparaging a teacher or staff member by name, etc) should be removed promptly when appropriate under district guidelines. If you have questions about whether a comment should be removed, please contact the Communications Department.

19. Can I post my opinion about something happening in the district on my personal social media account?

The guidelines are not intended to prevent employees from discussing workplace matters or exercising legally protected speech. Employees should remember, however, that online conduct or speech may result in discipline when the district reasonably determines it causes an actual, material disruption to school activities. Employees also should not make offensive comments about students or colleagues.

20. What if my personal account says "views are my own" or doesn't list York School District One as my employer?

A disclaimer does not necessarily prevent content from being associated with you professionally. Privacy settings also cannot guarantee that content will remain private. Employees should assume anything posted online could eventually become public.

21. Is X (formerly Twitter) prohibited?

No. X is no longer recommended because the district has had historically low engagement on the platform. This is a recommendation, not a requirement.

22. I already have a classroom, team or school-related social media account. Do I need to do anything?

Yes. Review the account to make sure it complies with the current guidelines, including administrative approval, account access, FERPA requirements, branding and content expectations.

23. I'm still not sure whether something is appropriate to post. What should I do?

Contact Janet Parker for assistance.

Personal account vs. Professional (school or district associated) account

I'm a teacher influencer and share teaching tips, classroom organization ideas or education-related content with a general audience. Is that a school account?

No. If the account is created for your own use and the intended audience is the general public rather than YSD1 students and families, it is your personal account. Personal

content should be created outside of work hours, off district property, and should not include students or confidential student information.

I created an Instagram account specifically so parents can see what we are doing in my classroom. Is that personal or professional?

Professional. Because the account represents your classroom and is intended primarily for students and families in the school community, it is a school-related account. It requires administrative approval and must follow the district's social media and FERPA guidelines.

My bio says, "3rd Grade Teacher at ABC Elementary," but the account is my personal Instagram. Does listing my job make it a school account?

No. Identifying yourself as a YSD1 employee does not automatically turn your personal account into a professional/official district account. However, because you have publicly associated yourself with YSD1, your content may also be associated with your professional role. The district's expectations regarding personal social media use still apply.

I have a public TikTok where I talk about teaching, but I never show students. Is that allowed?

The TikTok/ByteDance prohibition applies to all district resources, which includes district schools and facilities. You should not be using or creating on TikTok while you are at work or on district property.

Can I make funny teacher videos in my classroom if no students are present?

If the videos are for your personal account, they should be created outside of work hours.

I run the football team's Instagram account from my personal phone. Is it still a professional account?

Yes. The device used to manage the account does not determine whether it is personal or professional. Because the account represents a YSD1 team, it is a school-related account and must follow district guidelines.

I created a Facebook group just for the parents in my class, and the group is private. Is that a personal account?

No. It is a school-related account because it was created for your classroom and school community. The fact that it is private does not change that classification, and FERPA requirements still apply.

I repost something from my school's Facebook page onto my personal Facebook page. Is that OK?

Yes! Sharing content that has already been published by an official district or school account is different from independently publishing student information or images from your personal account.

I coach a school team and created an account where I post schedules, scores and team photos. Personal or professional?

Professional. The account exists because of your YSD1 role and represents a YSD1 team. Administrative approval and all district social media guidelines apply.

I started an account years ago for my classroom without asking permission. Do I have to delete it?

Not necessarily. Let your administrator know about the account and review it against the current guidelines. Make any necessary changes to bring the account into compliance.

I use my personal Facebook account to communicate with parents. Does that make it a professional account?

Using a personal account for school communication creates unnecessary overlap between personal and professional social media. District-approved communication platforms (Parentsquare) should be used for communication with students and families.

A former student follows me after graduating. Is that prohibited?

Our guidelines specifically address students who are currently enrolled in district schools. Employees should still use professional judgment regarding online relationships with former students.

What's the easiest way to decide whether an account is personal or school-related?

Ask what the account represents and who it is intended to serve. If it represents a YSD1 classroom, school, team, club, department or program, or exists primarily to communicate with the YSD1 school community, treat it as a school-related account. If it represents you as an individual and is intended for an audience outside the school community, it is generally a personal account.