

**EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY TEMPLATE**

# For Education Organizations

A practical policy template for employee social media use, official school accounts, student privacy, staff-student boundaries, parent communication, photo and video consent, confidential records, crisis communication, and online conduct.

<b>Institution:</b>	[School / Institution Name]
<b>Version:</b>	[Version Number]
<b>Effective Date:</b>	[Effective Date]
<b>Owner:</b>	[Department or Role]
<b>Contact:</b>	[Contact Email or Channel]

**Important note**

This template is a starting point and should be reviewed by legal counsel, HR, student privacy, information security, communications, and school leadership before use. It is not legal advice.

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## 1. Purpose

[School / Institution Name] recognizes that employees use social media to communicate, share information, connect with families and students, promote school activities, and participate in online communities.

This policy explains how employees should use social media when their activity may relate to [School / Institution Name], students, families, staff, classrooms, programs, school events, athletics, clubs, official accounts, or the institution's reputation.

The goal is not to control every personal post. The goal is to protect students, respect families, maintain professional boundaries, protect confidential information, and help employees understand when social media use may affect their role with [School / Institution Name].

## 2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all [School / Institution Name] employees and representatives, including teachers, administrators, coaches, counselors, office staff, classroom aides, substitute teachers, bus drivers and transportation staff, food service staff, athletics staff, club and activity sponsors, student workers, volunteers, contractors, interns, student teachers, trainees, and any person authorized to post on behalf of [School / Institution Name].

This policy applies to personal social media use when posts relate to [School / Institution Name], students, families, staff, school activities, school facilities, official accounts, or work-related matters. It also applies to official school, district, department, team, club, classroom, or program social media accounts.

## 3. Platforms covered by this policy

This policy applies to social media platforms, messaging apps, online communities, video platforms, blogs, forums, livestreams, private groups, and public comment sections.

**bullet** Examples include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat, Threads, Reddit, Discord, WhatsApp, GroupMe, Slack, Microsoft Teams, class communication apps, blogs, forums, review sites, private groups, and any future platform where users post, comment, share, message, stream, or upload content.

Private accounts, disappearing messages, restricted groups, or "friends only" settings do not guarantee privacy. Screenshots, reposts, recordings, forwarded messages, and archives can still exist after the original post is deleted.

## 4. Personal accounts vs. official school accounts

Employees may use personal social media accounts for personal expression. However, employees should make clear when they are speaking for themselves and not for [School / Institution Name].

Only authorized employees may create, manage, or post from official [School / Institution Name] social media accounts.

Employees may not create accounts, pages, groups, usernames, or profiles that appear to represent [School / Institution Name], a school campus, department, classroom, sports team, club, program, or student organization unless approved by [Department or Role].

Official accounts should be created, owned, and managed according to [School / Institution Name] procedures. Account access should not be tied only to one employee's personal email, phone number, or personal social media profile.

## 5. Student privacy

Employees must protect student privacy at all times. Employees may not post, share, upload, record, livestream, screenshot, forward, or disclose confidential student information on social media.

**bullet** Student names connected to private matters

**bullet** Student ID numbers, grades, test scores, attendance information, discipline records, special education information, disability-related information, medical information, counseling information, family information, home addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, student schedules, transportation details, legal or custody information, internal student records, screenshots from student information systems, and any information protected by law or school policy

Employees should not describe a student situation online if the student could reasonably be identified, even if the student's name is not used.

## 6. Photos and videos of students

Employees may not post photos, videos, livestreams, recordings, or images of students unless allowed by [School / Institution Name] policy and supported by required parent, guardian, or student consent.

**bullet** Before posting student images or videos, confirm the account is authorized for official school use, proper media consent is on file, the post follows communications guidelines, the image does not reveal confidential information, the post does not embarrass or expose a student, and the location, schedule, or safety of students is not compromised.

Employees should avoid posting student discipline situations, medical incidents, counseling or emotional support situations, special education services, private conversations with students, student addresses or locations, student login screens or records, or images from bathrooms, locker rooms, health offices, counseling offices, or other private areas.

When in doubt, do not post the image or video. Ask [Department or Role] first.

## 7. Professional boundaries with students

Employees must maintain professional boundaries with students online. Employees should not use personal social media accounts to communicate privately with current students unless specifically allowed by [School / Institution Name] policy and approved communication procedures.

**bullet** Do not add current students as friends or followers on personal accounts, send private messages to students from personal accounts, use disappearing messages for school-related communication, communicate with students late at night for non-emergency reasons, share inappropriate personal content, comment on student personal posts in a way that could appear unprofessional, use personal accounts to conduct official school business, or create unofficial student groups without approval.

Student communication should happen through approved school systems, official accounts, school email, learning platforms, or other approved communication tools.

## 8. Communication with families and guardians

Employees should communicate with families and guardians through approved channels.

Employees should not use personal social media accounts to discuss private student matters, grades, discipline, attendance, medical issues, accommodations, family disputes, or other confidential topics.

Employees should not respond publicly to parent or guardian complaints involving specific students, staff members, discipline, safety matters, investigations, or confidential school issues. Sensitive concerns should be moved to approved communication channels and escalated to [Department or Role] when needed.

## 9. Do not speak for [School / Institution Name] unless authorized

Employees may not present personal opinions as official statements from [School / Institution Name]. Unless authorized, employees should not use language such as “[School / Institution Name] believes,” “our official position is,” “we are announcing,” “on behalf of [School / Institution Name],” “the district will,” or “the school has decided.”

Employees should refer media inquiries, legal questions, public complaints, crisis situations, safety issues, law enforcement matters, and sensitive community issues to [Department or Role].

## 10. Disclose your connection when needed

Employees should be transparent about their relationship with [School / Institution Name] when posting about school-related matters.

If an employee discusses [School / Institution Name], school programs, athletics, policies, students, families, community issues, or education topics directly related to their role, they should make clear that they work for [School / Institution Name] and that their views are personal unless they are authorized to speak officially.

**bullet** Example: “I work for [School / Institution Name], but these views are my own.”

**bullet** Example: “I’m an employee of [School / Institution Name], and this is my personal opinion.”

**bullet** Example: “I’m not speaking on behalf of the school or district.”

Employees may not hide their employment relationship when endorsing, defending, reviewing, or promoting [School / Institution Name] programs, services, events, or initiatives.

## 11. Protect confidential school information

Employees may not post, share, upload, livestream, screenshot, forward, or disclose confidential or non-public school information.

**bullet** Student records, staff records, internal investigations, security procedures, emergency response plans, testing materials, internal emails or messages, non-public meeting notes, personnel matters, legal matters, vendor contracts, budget information not yet public, technology access details, login credentials, internal reports, unreleased announcements, and confidential board or administrative matters

If information is not public, employees should not be the ones to make it public. When in doubt, do not post. Ask [Department or Role] first.

## 12. Professional conduct online

Employees are expected to follow [School / Institution Name] conduct standards online just as they would at work.

Employees may not use social media to harass, threaten, bully, intimidate, discriminate against, dox, or target students, families, coworkers, volunteers, vendors, applicants, or community members.

**bullet** Prohibited conduct may include racist comments, sexist comments, religious harassment, disability-related harassment, age-related harassment, sexual harassment, threats of violence, bullying, posting private information about others, mocking students, families, or coworkers, encouraging harassment by others, retaliating against someone for reporting a concern, or sharing offensive images, memes, or videos tied to protected characteristics.

This policy applies even when posts are made from personal accounts or outside work hours if the conduct affects students, families, coworkers, the workplace, or [School / Institution Name].

## 13. Employee rights are respected

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent employees from discussing wages, hours, schedules, staffing, workplace safety, working conditions, benefits, union activity, or other rights protected by law.

Employees may have the right to discuss work-related concerns with coworkers, government agencies, labor organizations, or others.

Employees should still avoid sharing student information, confidential records, private employee information, security-sensitive information, or non-public school information when discussing workplace concerns.

### **Policy note**

This section should be reviewed by counsel to make sure the final policy complies with labor and employment laws in all applicable jurisdictions.

## 14. Use of social media during work

Employees should not use personal social media during work time unless permitted by their supervisor or required for their role.

**bullet** Social media use must not interfere with student supervision, instruction, safety, confidentiality, job duties, classroom management, meetings, transportation duties, student services, emergency response, or professional responsibilities.

Company or school devices, networks, and systems should be used according to [School / Institution Name] technology and acceptable use policies.

## 15. Official school accounts

Only authorized employees may manage or post from official [School / Institution Name] accounts. Official accounts may include accounts for the district, individual schools, departments, classrooms, athletics, clubs, student organizations, parent organizations, programs, and events.

**bullet** Employees with access to official accounts must use approved login and security procedures, use multi-factor authentication where required, protect credentials, follow brand and communications guidelines, use approved images, videos, copy, and disclaimers, respect copyright and trademark rules, protect student and employee privacy, follow approval workflows, avoid personal opinions from official accounts, escalate sensitive issues quickly, report access issues immediately, and never share passwords outside approved systems.

When an employee leaves [School / Institution Name] or changes roles, access to official accounts must be removed promptly.

## 16. Comments, moderation, and public engagement

Official school accounts should be used to share accurate, helpful, and appropriate information with the school community.

Employees managing official accounts should not delete, hide, or block comments based only on disagreement or criticism unless allowed by [School / Institution Name] policy and applicable law.

**bullet** Comments may be removed or escalated when they include threats, harassment, hate speech, student information, private employee information, spam, scams, obscenity, illegal activity, impersonation, confidential information, content that disrupts school operations or safety, or content that violates published comment rules.

Official accounts should include clear public comment guidelines where appropriate.

## 17. School events, athletics, and student activities

Employees may post about school events, athletics, clubs, performances, competitions, and student activities only when doing so follows [School / Institution Name] communications and privacy policies.

Employees should confirm media consent before posting student photos, videos, names, awards, jersey numbers, performances, or identifying details.

Coaches, club sponsors, and activity leaders should use approved communication channels for team or club communication. Employees should not use personal accounts to privately message students about team, club, or school business unless specifically allowed by policy.

## 18. Emergencies, safety issues, and crisis communication

Employees may not post on behalf of [School / Institution Name] about emergencies, threats, law enforcement activity, lockdowns, accidents, student injuries, weather closures, investigations, or crisis situations unless authorized.

**bullet** Employees should not share emergency response details, law enforcement activity, student injuries, student names or conditions, security procedures, investigation details, rumors or unverified information, or photos or videos of emergency situations.

Employees should follow [School / Institution Name] emergency communication procedures and refer questions to [Department or Role].

## 19. Reviews, endorsements, fundraising, and promotions

Employees may not post fake reviews, misleading reviews, or anonymous endorsements of [School / Institution Name] programs, services, events, or partners.

If employees promote school fundraisers, events, sponsorships, services, or partnerships, they should follow [School / Institution Name] approval procedures.

Employees may not offer unauthorized prizes, incentives, contests, giveaways, discounts, or fundraising claims on behalf of [School / Institution Name]. Any fundraising, sponsorship, contest, or promotional activity should be approved by [Department or Role].

## 20. Copyright, trademarks, and third-party content

Employees should not post content that belongs to someone else unless they have permission or the content is approved for use.

**bullet** This includes photos, videos, music, logos, artwork, student work, curriculum materials, textbooks, testing materials, presentations, software screenshots, vendor content, internal documents, and school branding.

Employees may not misuse [School / Institution Name] logos, mascots, slogans, trademarks, school names, athletic marks, or brand assets. Student work should not be posted publicly without appropriate permission and compliance with school policy.

## 21. Use of AI-generated content

Employees should be careful when using AI tools to create social media content related to [School / Institution Name].

Employees may not enter student information, confidential school information, private employee information, disciplinary records, special education records, health information, or internal documents into unapproved AI tools.

AI-generated content for official school accounts must follow review and approval processes. Employees are responsible for checking AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, copyright concerns, confidentiality issues, and misleading information before posting.

## 22. Managers, administrators, coaches, and supervisors

Administrators, managers, coaches, counselors, and supervisors have additional responsibilities because their posts may be more closely tied to [School / Institution Name].

**bullet** They should not pressure employees or students to connect on personal social media, ask employees, applicants, students, or families for social media passwords, discuss private student or employee matters online, post about discipline, grades, accommodations, complaints, investigations, or personnel matters, retaliate against employees for protected workplace discussions, retaliate against students or families for raising concerns, or make public statements that appear to represent [School / Institution Name] unless authorized.

Leaders should model good judgment and ask [Department or Role] before posting about sensitive topics.

## 23. Reporting concerns

Employees should report social media activity that may violate this policy or create risk for [School / Institution Name].

**bullet** Examples include student privacy concerns, unauthorized student photos or videos, disclosure of confidential information, harassment or threats, fake school accounts, impersonation of staff or students, unauthorized use of logos or school names, security risks, unauthorized media comments, misleading school announcements, inappropriate staff-student communication, or photos or videos from restricted areas.

Reports can be made to [Department or Role], [HR Contact], [Student Privacy Contact], [Security Contact], [Legal Contact], or [Anonymous Reporting Channel if applicable]. [School / Institution Name] prohibits retaliation against employees who report concerns in good faith.

## 24. When to ask for help

Employees should ask [Department or Role] before posting if content involves student information, photos or videos of students, school emergencies, legal matters, media requests, public complaints, student discipline, special education matters, health or counseling information, confidential school information, school logos or branding, fundraising or sponsorships, official announcements, sensitive workplace topics, or anything that could be mistaken for an official school statement.

Questions should be directed to [Contact Email or Channel].

## 25. Policy violations

Violations of this policy may result in corrective action, up to and including termination, depending on the facts, applicable law, and [School / Institution Name] policy.

**bullet** Examples include sharing student information, posting student photos or videos without required permission, sharing confidential school information, speaking for [School / Institution Name] without authorization, harassing students, families, coworkers, or others online, using personal accounts for inappropriate student communication, misusing official accounts, sharing account passwords, posting unauthorized emergency information, misusing school logos or trademarks, or retaliating against protected activity or good-faith reporting.

[School / Institution Name] will review each situation based on the facts, applicable law, policy requirements, and impact on students, employees, families, and the school community.

## 26. Related policies

Employees should also review and follow related [School / Institution Name] policies, including:

- bullet** Code of Conduct
- bullet** Employee Handbook
- bullet** Student Privacy Policy
- bullet** Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
- bullet** Staff-Student Communication Policy
- bullet** Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- bullet** Media Relations Policy
- bullet** Emergency Communications Policy
- bullet** Records Retention Policy
- bullet** Photography and Video Consent Policy
- bullet** Athletics and Activities Policy
- bullet** AI Use Policy
- bullet** Copyright and Trademark Policy
- bullet** Disciplinary Action Policy

## 27. Employee acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the [School / Institution Name] Employee Social Media Policy. I understand that I am responsible for following this policy when using social media in ways that relate to [School / Institution Name], students, families, employees, programs, activities, facilities, official accounts, or reputation.

I understand that this policy does not prevent me from exercising rights protected by applicable law, including rights related to wages, hours, working conditions, protected concerted activity, reporting legal concerns, or participating in investigations.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager or HR Representative: \_\_\_\_\_