

# Brevard Public Schools' Social Media Guidelines

**Brevard Public Schools** values innovation, collaboration, and connecting others to the nobility of our mission. We recognize the importance of social media as a tool for communicating, teaching, and learning. This agreement addresses employees' use of publicly available social media including, but not limited to: blogs and micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life).

By reading and signing this document, employees acknowledge the following guidelines:

**Add value.** Millions of words have already been deposited in Cyberspace. If you invest a few words of your own, make them count. Comments and posts made about our District should be insightful and build a sense of community. Your online remarks are adding value if they increase knowledge or skills, solve problems, or help others understand education better.

**Be responsible.** You are ultimately accountable for what you write online. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, proceed with extreme caution. Take time to review these guidelines and try to figure out what's bothering you and fix it. If you're still unsure, you might want to discuss it with your supervisor. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Trademark, copyright, and fair use requirements must be respected.

**Be transparent.** Your honesty will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are posting about work, use your real name and identify your employment relationship with the District. Be clear about your role; if you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. If you publish to a site outside the District's network, please use a disclaimer to state in clear terms that the views expressed are the employee's alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of Brevard Public Schools.

**Protect confidential information.** Be thoughtful about what you publish. Make sure you do not disclose or use confidential information. Students, parents, and colleagues should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. For example, ask permission before posting someone's picture in a social network (student photos require parental consent) or publishing a conversation that was meant to be private. It is acceptable to discuss general details about projects, lessons, or events and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for an individual (e.g., Teacher A) so long as the information provided does not make it easy for someone to identify the individual or violate any privacy laws.

**Be respectful.** Always express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Make sure your communications are in good taste. Do not denigrate or insult others. Remember that our communities reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Be respectful. This includes proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Be sensitive about linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content.

*Citing Sources: The published policies and guidelines of [IBM](#), [Intel](#), [Kodak](#) and [Minnetonka School District](#) provided the foundation for Brevard Public Schools' Employee Guidelines for Social Media.*

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**Perception can be reality.** In online networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as a District employee, you are creating perceptions among community members, parents, students, and the general public about your expertise and about the District. You are also creating perceptions about yourself with your colleagues and managers. If you choose to join or engage with District students and families in a social media context, do so in a professional manner, ever mindful that in the minds of students, families, colleagues and the public, you are a District employee. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with the District's operational beliefs and values. To the best of our abilities, District employees should always act to ensure and protect the safety of students--online and offline.

**Keep your cool.** One of the aims of social media is to create dialogue, and people will not always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, stay cool. If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. Express your points in a clear, logical way. Don't pick fights. Sometimes, it's best to ignore a comment and not give it credibility by acknowledging it with a response.

**Be careful with personal information.** Make full use of privacy settings. Know how to disable anonymous postings and use moderating tools on your social media site(s). Astute criminals can piece together information you provide on different sites and then use it to impersonate you or someone you know, or even re-set your passwords.

**Be a positive role model.** The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. Educational employees have a responsibility to maintain appropriate employee-student relationships, whether on or off duty. Both case law and public expectations hold educational employees to a higher standard of conduct than the general public.

**Don't forget your day job.** You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job. Remember that District technologies are provided for educational use. Use of social media for personal discourse during District time or on District equipment is prohibited.

If you contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media—these recommendations are for you. We encourage all who participate in social media to understand and follow these guidelines.

By my signature, I have read and understand the Social Media Guidelines as described above.

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EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

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DATE

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