

STAFF SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Overview

Geneva Community Unit School District 304 supports the responsible use of online social media for school leaders and teachers to communicate with parents, students, and the community. The District also supports the use of social media as an instructional tool for helping students acquire 21st Century skills such as attending to an audience, understanding copyright laws, conducting quality research, and working collaboratively with others from across the globe.

The District's goal is to take advantage of the many benefits of social media while prioritizing students' safety and privacy. These guidelines are designed to help staff develop and maintain a responsible social media presence that positively represents the District, is in accordance with federal and state privacy laws, and provides benefit to District students and families, and the community at large.

A. 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. Social media is a two-way method of communication, allowing interaction during an informational exchange through user-generated content.

"Technology" includes computers, tablets, the Internet, telephones, mobile telephones, personal digital assistants, pagers, MP3 players, such as iPod's, 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.

"Content Owner" is the staff member who initiates a social media site and who is solely responsible for performing regular monitoring and maintenance of the site.

"Sponsor" is a person or organization that provides funds for a district or school project or activity.

B. Official District Social Media Presence

These guidelines are tailored primarily to social networking sites, including, but not limited to:

- Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>)
- Instagram (<https://instagram.com>)
- Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>)
- Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>)
- YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>)
- LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>)
- Blogs

Geneva School District encourages innovation and the use of cutting-edge technologies for communication and instructional purposes. If you wish to utilize a new social media tool that is not addressed in these guidelines, please contact the Communications Office to discuss its possible implementation.

C. Requisite Authorization

1. **Authorization** — District presence on any social media site, including school-related accounts, such as clubs, teams, field trips, course, or other sites associated with the district or a district school must be authorized by the District Communications Coordinator or designee. 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, please complete the online ***Request for Social Media Site*** form and identify a “content owner,” or individual responsible for performing regular monitoring and maintenance of the social media site account, and a responsible administrator assigned to the specific site. Please note that for emergency purposes only, each district-affiliated site or social media account must name the district’s Communications Coordinator as an administrator. However, the site, specifically the content owner and responsible administrator, shall be responsible for monitoring and maintaining these sites and accounts.

Owners of sites existing prior to the adoption of these guidelines on **XXXXXX, 2015** should complete the *Request for Social Media Site* form post-haste to gain formal approval of their site.

2. **Booster, Foundation, and PTO 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 PTO websites, including, but not limited to, directing that district policies regarding fundraisers and fees be properly reflected on the website.

3. **District Logo** — The use of the Geneva Community Unit School District logo(s) or other branded material on a social media site must be approved by the Communications Office. For approved logo use, follow [Geneva School District's Graphic Identity Standards](#) established by the Communications Office.
4. **General District Sites and Accounts** — The district's general social media sites, including the district's blogs, Facebook, and Twitter accounts, will be managed by the Communications Office. Duplicate, unofficial sites shall be reported and investigated.
5. **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.

Content Disclaimer — Any approved official presence on social media sites outside of those created and monitored by the district's Communications Office shall include the following text:

“The views expressed on this site may not reflect the views of Geneva Community Unit School District 304. This site contains user-created content which is not endorsed by the District. The purpose of this site is”... (then specify the purpose).

D. 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, following [Geneva School District's Website Guidelines and Policies](#) established by the Communications Office.

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.
4. All postings and comments by users are monitored and responded to as necessary on a regular basis. Postings and comments of an inappropriate nature or containing information unrelated to official or District business should be deleted promptly. Such postings shall be reported, investigated, and authors will be disciplined as appropriate.

E. Posting Images and Other Student Information

Photos and Videos

District staff are allowed to post photographs and videos of students on district social media sites unless a pictured student is on the “opt-out” list maintained by the school office. Before posting any pictures or videos, staff should carefully review the “opt-out” list to ensure that no “opted-out” student appears in any of the images.

When posting a photo of a student on social media, it is best practice not to include any personally identifiable information (name, grade, city, etc.) of that student. In the event of student recognitions (honors, awards, etc.) the students’ names may be posted with the express written consent of the parent or guardian. No student photographs should ever be published for a staff member’s personal or promotional use, or any other non-school related purpose.

Staff should always err on the side of caution when it comes to protecting student privacy and safety and should use discretion when choosing which pictures and/or videos to post.

Student Contact Information

Staff should never post student contact information on social media. If there is a legitimate reason for the viewer to contact someone, only the teacher or staff member should receive such messages.

Student Work

Staff must gain the written permission of parents before posting an individual student’s work online. Group/class projects that do not contain students’ personally identifiable information are okay to post.

Re-Posting/Sharing

If a student has already been mentioned in an online newspaper article or another post/Tweet, it is okay to share the post on your site or link to the article. Do not re-post the information as your own post unless you have the parent’s written permission.

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

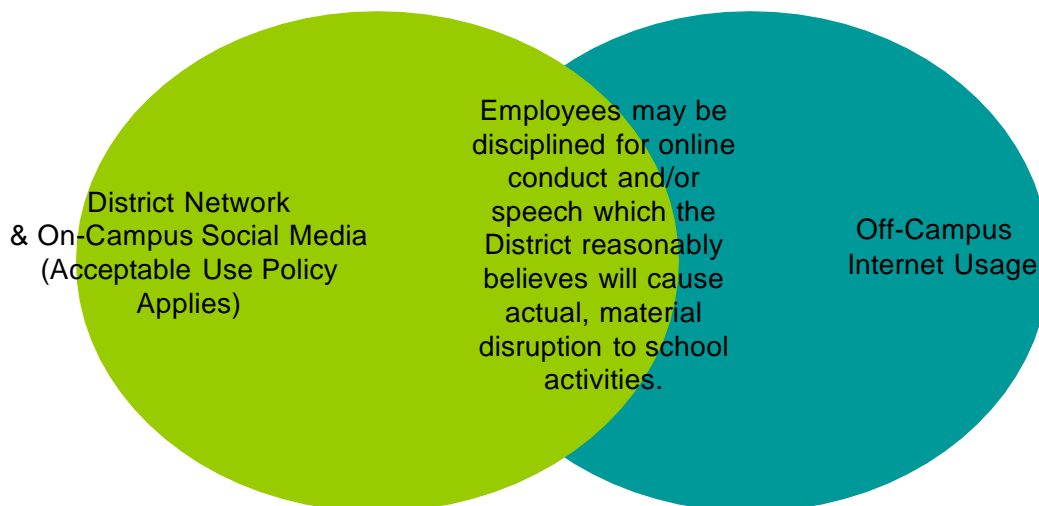
Although staff and students enjoy free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, certain types of communication, typically by virtue of their subject-matter connection to campus, may relate enough to school to have ramifications for the author or subject at the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

When using district technology, electronic communication is governed by the district acceptable use policy, 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, including, but not limited to personal blogging, instant messaging, 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 acceptable use policy 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 (*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District, 1969*).

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.

This section of the guidelines is intended to present to district staff members examples of such situations, and guidelines for responsible, ethical internet use.



1. Staff Use of Personal Technology

- a. **Limit On-Duty Use** – Staff members are required 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.
- b. **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.
- c. **Student Photographs** – Staff members cannot use photographs or other material that personally identifies students for personal gain or profit without explicit permission from parents. 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.
- d. **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.
- e. **Personal Social Networking and Media Accounts** – Before an employee creates or joins an online social network, he/she should ask himself/herself whether he/she would be comfortable if a 'friend' decided to send the information to his/her students, the students' parents, or his/her supervisor. Educators must give serious thought to the implications of joining an online social network.
- f. **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. If there is unwanted information posted about an employee online, the employee should contact the site administrator to request its removal.
- g. **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, with the exception of those with direct

familial ties. 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.

- h. **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.

Because online content can be spread in mere seconds to a mass audience, the District encourages employees to ask themselves before posting any information online whether they would be comfortable having this information printed in the newspaper alongside their photo.

If you would not bring it into the classroom, do not post it online!

References (Partial List)

Law

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

Policy

7530.01 - Staff Use of Wireless Communication Devices

7540 - Acceptable Use Policy

7540.01 - Technology Privacy

7540.02 - District Web Site

7540.03 - Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety

7540.04 - Staff Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety

The District Communications Office is always available to assist staff in navigating these social media guidelines. If you aren't sure if you can post something, ask us first.