

Wausau School District

Social Media Guidelines for Staff, Students, and Community

Purpose of Social Media Guidelines

The Wausau School District realizes that part of 21st Century learning is adapting to the changing methods of technology use and communication. The importance of teachers, students, and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is vital to preparing students for a global society and for advancing student learning, achievement, and success. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide direction for District employees, students, and the community in navigating the appropriate social media tools in their professional and personal lives. Free speech protects individuals who want to participate in social media; however, regardless of a participant's status (student, employee, or community member), when using social media tools, be mindful that the Wausau School District expects participants to follow rules and practice online etiquette outlined below. Please read all rules, guidelines, and etiquette before participating in any social media application.

What is Social Media?

User-created online content designed in a collaborative environment where users share opinions, knowledge, and information with each other.

Tools include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs (Blogger, WordPress, etc.)
- Wikis (Wikispaces, Google Sites, etc.)
- Social Networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing sites (YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Diigo, Delicious, etc.)
- Podcasting and Vodcasting (Skype, FaceTime)

Social Media Guidelines for Staff

The Wausau School District social media policy allows employees to participate in online social activities both personally and professionally. These guidelines have been created as a resource for you. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability; keeping in mind that information produced by Wausau School District employees and students is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to the District's Acceptable Use Policy. Free speech protects individuals who want to participate in social media; however, there are laws and courts have ruled that school districts can discipline employees if their speech, including online postings, disrupts school operations.

It is the responsibility of the employee to become familiar with the appropriate security settings for any personal or professional social media that you use. Be sure the settings are such that any personal content may only be viewed by your intended audience. Be aware that, even if your privacy settings are set properly, it is still possible for anyone who you allowed to see your

profile to copy and paste text and send it to someone else. Similarly, if you enable settings such as Facebook's ability to allow "friends of friends" to view your content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are sometimes blurred in the digital world. Employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our District and schools; remember, you are role models to students in this community. Because readers of social media may view employees as representatives of the District and schools, employees must observe the following rules when referring to the District, its schools, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers, communities, etc., on any social media network.

Personal Social Media Account

A personal social media account is a profile that is used to network for personal purposes such as networking/connecting with family and friends.

- Staff may not *Friend*, follow, etc., current students through their personal accounts.
- Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community must reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the District's or employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents/guardians or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children.
- Employees may not use District contact information (logo, email, address, phone, etc.) when using personal social media accounts.
- An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's postings, displays, or communication on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable District policies.
- Employees who choose to participate in a blog, wiki, online social network, or any other form of online publishing or discussion should be mindful of the information they post. Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use during face-to-face communications.
- By virtue of identifying yourself as a District employee online you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents, and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at the District. Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications (by word, image, or other means). Employees shall not use obscene, profane, or vulgar language on any social media network or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, or bullying.

Social Media Guidelines for Students

- Social media venues are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint forever, usually even after it is deleted. Do not post anything that you would not want friends, enemies,

parents, teachers, prospective colleges and universities, or a future employer to see. Make sure what you post promotes a positive image to the world.

- Follow the school's code of conduct when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, do it in a respectful, constructive way. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, any phone numbers, addresses, birthdates, and pictures that reveal personal information. Do not share your password with anyone besides your parents, and teachers if necessary.
- Linking to other Web sites to support your thoughts and ideas is recommended. However, be sure to read the entire article prior to linking to ensure that all information is appropriate for a school setting.
- Do your own work! Do not use other people's intellectual property, including pictures, without their permission. It is a violation of copyright law to copy and paste other's thoughts without proper attribution. When paraphrasing another's idea(s), be sure to cite your source with the specific web address. Verify you have permission to use the material or it is under Creative Commons attribution.
- How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity.
- Blog, wiki, and other online posts should be well written. Follow writing conventions including proper grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. If you have permission to edit someone else's work, be sure it is in the spirit of improving the writing.
- If you run across inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, tell the supervising adult right away.
- Cyberbullying is not tolerated. Cyberbullying is clearly outlined in the District's Parent/Student Handbook through Board Policy 5706 – Prohibition Against Harassment and Discrimination.
- Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the project and/or access to future use of online tools.

Social Media Guidelines for Community

The Basics:

- Be respectful. Treat others with courtesy and respect, even if you strongly disagree with what they are saying.
- Stay on topic.
- Keep your personal information confidential.
- Do not post information that could identify others or compromise another's safety.
- Post original content. Please do not post copyrighted information without permission.
- If posts disregard our guidelines, we will remove them to keep our community safe.

Your Comments:

Our social media pages can be viewed by anyone. We are only responsible for content we post. The views expressed by the public on our pages do not necessarily represent our views.

Another thing to consider before posting on our public pages is that your comments may be viewed publicly in search engine results. If, after posting, you realize you are not comfortable with your post, you can delete it.

Questions:

One reason we are on social media is to help you. If you pose a question, do not include personal information. Remember, your post will be public. We will respond to you as fast as we can, during business hours. If posting during non-business hours, we will get back to you in a timely fashion.

The preferred option for posing questions, is to utilize the *Contact Us* button on the District website.

Complaints:

We take complaints very seriously and want to ensure any issues are dealt with properly. Our social media pages are not the right place to file a complaint. However, if you do post a comment that could be considered a complaint, legal notice, claim, demand, or any other notice we will contact you regarding the matter. Wausau School District is a mandated reporter and any information that we receive about financial, physical, sexual, neglect or other types of abuse will be reported to the proper authorities. We may also take down a post if it violates our policies or puts your personal information in jeopardy.

The preferred option for filing complaints is to contact the District directly or to utilize the *Contact Us* button on the District website.

Community Safety:

If a post looks like or is a scam, criminal content or a virus, we will delete it immediately. We have the right to ban anyone from our pages if they abuse our guidelines. We will also report any social media activity we deem inappropriate or criminal to the proper authorities.

Inappropriate Content:

As previously stated, inappropriate comments will be deleted. These comments include anything that is harassing, profane, obscene, suggestive, disruptive, solicitous, indecent, sexually explicit, pornographic, threatening, abusive, defamatory, libelous, derogatory, discriminatory, hate speech, or if the comment is unrelated to the topic at hand. Also, if we know the comment is libelous or untrue, it will be deleted. Comments that we consider inappropriate will immediately, without warning, be deleted.

If we view the comments and have the inclination there is a potential for that comment to become inappropriate, we may comment as a reminder to stay within the guidelines. Reminders or warnings may not always be issued. If we believe a comment is spam or may contain a virus, we will also delete the comment. A comment could also be deleted if it is a duplicate of a

previous comment. When that occurs, if the comment becomes spam-like in nature, it will be removed.

Sharing:

Social media is a great way for us to share information. When we find it to be interesting or helpful information, we will pass it along in a link on our social media pages.

Privacy and Security:

When you post to our social media pages, you are sharing your views publicly. This means we may share or re-publish your ideas, when credited properly, in our marketing materials, website, cable channel, or other communication outlets. We may use your comments in our marketing materials; we will not attribute it to you without your permission.

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