GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WITH STUDENTS

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Contents

CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOLS DISTRICT MAINTAINING RESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS:
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INTRODUCTION

The use of social media tools has proven to be a popular, cost-effective method for sharing ideas, encouraging collaboration and improving communications. Misuse of these tools has the potential to result in unintended consequences. Guidelines and recommendations for using social media technologies in a manner that minimizes risks are presented in this document.

These guidelines are designed to help protect the reputation and credibility of the Cherokee County School District (CCSD), our employees and our students who create or contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds or other social media.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

These principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of CCSD, as well as personal use.

1. Adhere to CCSD Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

2. Be accountable for your actions and what you write and post. Remember that you are additionally governed by standards for The Code of Ethics for Educators in Georgia.

3. Use common sense and good judgment - your statements could have an impact on the District's or school's reputation. Remember what you post or publish may be public information for a long time.

4. Be accurate, honest and genuine and take responsibility for your mistakes. A conversational, personal tone often works best - similar to how you would speak. If you make a mistake, or someone questions a statement or claim you make, it is your responsibility to investigate it. When appropriate, you must quickly correct any mistakes or provide any necessary clarifications.

5. Respect others in your posts and discussions. Social media networks and on-line communications must not be used to attack or insult CCSD, fellow employees, students, parents, vendors, contractors, suppliers, competitors or others.

6. Be sensible. Do not make posts or comments that may be considered defamatory, obscene, libelous, threatening, harassing or embarrassing to others.

7. Be transparent. If you are writing about CCSD or the K-12 industry, use your real name (not a pseudonym), identify that you work for CCSD, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in what you are discussing, be the first to openly say so.

8. Be appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation that threatens to become antagonistic, refrain from becoming overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of your Office of Public Information, Communications and Partnerships representative.

9. Be certain. If you are uncertain about whether to post or discuss something that is related to CCSD, seek the advice of your supervisor, a representative from the Office of Public Information, Communications and Partnerships or another appropriate person within the CCSD organization.

10. Be ethical. Do not disclose any confidential, proprietary or sensitive information regarding CCSD, our employees, students, vendors, contractors, suppliers, competitors or others. Often, internal communications should not be forwarded outside of our organization. If you're uncertain whether information is meant to be private or internal to CCSD, seek the advice of your supervisor, a representative from the Division of Public Information, Communications and Partnerships or another appropriate person within the CCSD organization.

11. Refer media and press inquiries to our authorized District spokespersons. Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention. If members of the media, including journalists or bloggers, contact you about a statement that you made that might be considered sensitive to CCSD, please refer them to an appropriate Division of Public Information, Communications and Partnerships contact unless you have been authorized to respond or speak on behalf of our organization.

12. Obtain appropriate permission. Before you refer to or post images of current or former employees, students, vendors or suppliers by name, be sure you have appropriate permission. Get written permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property. Additionally, seek permission of your supervisor when implementing a form of social media new to your classroom or job related responsibilities.

13. Minimize security risks. Social media sites and accounts can attract hackers and can present risks to corporate networks, as well as your personal computer or mobile device. A compromised account can also create disclosure concerns for the organization. To minimize these risks, use a password for social media accounts that is not easy to guess. Monitor your social media accounts periodically if you do not actively use them. Also, be mindful that social media sites sometimes are used to distribute malicious software or code, or "malware". If you think a link sent to you might be malware, do not click on it, as it could result in software or code being downloaded or installed on your own computer and/or the CCSD network.

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO: USE WITH STUDENTS

1. The teacher must be the originator of the classroom social media "tool" and will manage and monitor the tool's use.

2. The teacher must ensure all students in the class have access to the social media tool(s) during the assignment time period. Alternative assignments must be given to students that do not have access to social media sites.

3. The social media tool(s) used must have an educational purpose directly tied to the curricular area for which the instructor teaches.

4. If direct communication with students is needed, teachers are required to maintain appropriate on-line dialogue at all times.

5. It is the teacher's responsibility to model and teach appropriate rules of digital citizenship. Students will be directed to advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.

6. School administrators must be informed when implementing a form of social media new to your classroom.

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO: PROFESSIONAL USE

1. Remember that you are representing CCSD in your posts and content.
2. Do not delete a comment just because you disagree with the commenter's point of view. Comments are an important part of the conversation on blogs, and people will disagree with you. However, you can (and should) monitor user-generated content on blogs and you may delete any comments that are offensive, obscene, inflammatory, libelous, violate copyright or are obviously spam with links to irrelevant blogs or websites, or are completely unrelated to the topic of the post.

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO: PERSONAL USE

1. Social media use must not interfere with your responsibilities at CCSD. The District's computer systems are to be used primarily for education purposes.
2. Do not use CCSD logos (or any of our school logos) on personal blogs, websites or other types of online content.
3. Do not host personal blogs, websites or other types of online content on any property, equipment or resources owned or leased by CCSD.

VIOLATIONS

If you violate these guidelines, you may be required to correct, edit or remove a post or statement. In addition, violations of these guidelines by employees or students can result in disciplinary action.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

Ensure Safety and Security

- Maintain confidentiality
- Maintain privacy
- Protect your identity
- Be aware of liability
- Maintain appropriate dialogue

Be a Good Digital Citizen

- Do no harm
- Respect others
- Think before you post
- Be a contributing member
- Understand your personal responsibility
- Correct mistakes promptly
- Ensure accuracy
- Follow copyright and intellectual property laws

Focus on Respect

- Respect your audience
- Post appropriate content at appropriate times
- Be authentic
- Be conscientious
- Do not use pseudonyms
- Use disclaimers when necessary
- Do not use the CCSD Logo
- Monitor your feedback/comments
- Obtain appropriate approval
- Report instances of cyber bullying

TERMINOLOGY

Blogs

A **blog** is defined as a personal journal published on the Internet consisting of discrete entries ("posts"), typically displayed in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first. Blogs are usually the work of a single individual, occasionally of a small group, and often are themed on a single subject. Blogs are also used for an individual or group of users to record opinions, information, etc., on a regular basis.

CCSD teachers are permitted to generate classroom specific websites referred to as "blogs" for purposes of providing students with the ability to electronically exchange commentary and/or information related to a particular classroom topic. All blog assignments will be developed and monitored by the respective teaching staff member in accordance with the CCSD Acceptable Use Policy. Any blog established is considered a virtual extension of the classroom and therefore all CCSD rules and regulations shall apply.

Digital Images

Images are one of the most popular forms of social media content. Particular care will be taken to practice legal and ethical behavior when publishing information and images on the Internet. Creative Commons is a website that supports and stewards legal sharing of images. Creative Commons' licenses provide a flexible range of protections and freedoms.

Social Networks

A social network is an online community of people with a common interest who use a web site such as Facebook or other technologies to communicate with each other and share information, resources, etc.

Prior to the use of any social network as part of classroom instruction, you must obtain permission from your Principal or immediate supervisor.

When building a page for use as a part of classroom instruction, you must identify the page in the page description area as a classroom or organization in the "Cherokee County School District." The CCSD Social Network Rules of Engagement must be posted on any page created. (See Appendix A)

Instant Electronic Communication

Instant Electronic Communication (IEC) or Instant Messaging is a set of communication technologies used for text, video or audio communication between two or more participants over the Internet or other types of networks in real-time. IEC allows effective and efficient communication, providing for immediate receipt of acknowledgment or reply.

Careful consideration must be taken when setting up or posting profiles, biographies, avatars, images or videos.

Micro Blogging

Micro blogging is a web service that allows the subscriber to broadcast short messages to other subscribers of the service. Microposts can be made public on a web site and/or distributed to a private group of subscribers. Subscribers can read microblog posts online or request that updates be delivered in real time to their desktop as an instant message or sent to a mobile device as an SMS text message. The appeal of microblogging is both its immediacy and portability. Posts are brief (typically 140 – 200 characters) and can be written or received with a variety of computing devices, including cell phones.

A school's micro blogging account owner must be the principal or his/her designee. The principal and his/her designee must have administrative rights to the account.

Social Bookmarking

Social bookmarking presents a new way to organize information, categorize resources and share curricular tools/resources with students, staff, as well as other like-minded individuals. It also gives the user access to a large network of users and their interests, the social connection of this tool. The use of social bookmarking tools enables teachers and students of the CCSD to organize, locate and share information within the classroom setting, to improve their learning outcomes by utilizing and integrating information in an efficient manner and to have equitable access to bookmarked learning resources. All core curricular areas and domains can benefit from social bookmarking tools: valid and authoritative resources can be effectively shared with students in a proficient manner.

The district's web filtering system is designed to prevent exposure to content that does not meet our filtering system's criteria. As part of digital citizenship education for students, teachers must be clear about proper procedures if inappropriate content is accessed.

Video

Videos are one of the most popular forms of multimedia content. This form of media is easily consumed, transferred and can project a great deal of information quickly. Particular care will be taken when considering the publication of information and videos on the Internet. Student produced content must be approved by his/her teacher prior to its use in the classroom.

All video content viewed at school or in the workplace will fall under the guidelines of the Acceptable Use Policy. It is the teacher's responsibility to preview the ENTIRE video prior to showing it in the classroom. Be aware that comments are often posted below online videos. These comments may not be appropriate for the classroom. All video viewing by students must be monitored and directed by the teacher.

Wikis

A wiki is a website, such as Wikispaces, whose users can add or modify content via a web browser. Wikis allow students to contribute to project teams, to produce original works or solve problems. Students are able to interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media on a wiki site. Teachers will be the owners and moderates of class wiki sites.

APPENDIX A

CCSD Social Network Rules of Engagement

All comments posted on this page are at the discretion of the page administrators. Naming specific employees or students in a negative way will not be allowed. The page administrators will review all postings to make sure they do not violate the District's Acceptable Use Guidelines regarding Internet access and practices, as well as Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provisions. People making comments on the page are requested to show respect for their fellow users by ensuring the discussion remains civil, especially since Facebook allows individuals 13 and over to join. Comments are also subject to Facebook's Terms of Use and Code of Conduct. Remember that your name and photo will be seen next to your comment, visible to anyone who visits the page. We welcome your thoughts and comments and look forward to what you have to say. However, we will not leave postings that:

1. Contain abusive, discriminatory or inappropriate language or statements. This includes remarks that contain obscenities or are sexually explicit.

2. Easily identify students and/or staff in defamatory, abusive, or generally negative terms. If you disagree with the content, we ask that you refrain from personal attacks or being disrespectful of others.

3. Do not show proper consideration for others' privacy or are considered likely to offend or provoke others – i.e., do not pick fights or goad others into inflammatory debates. Malicious intent and or participation not in the spirit of civil conversation will be excluded.

4. Are Off Topic. We will exclude comments not related to the subject of the conversation. If you have a question to ask on a different topic, please contact us via email. It is always best to start with the person most involved with your topic (classroom teacher, building principal, etc.).

5. Are spam – i.e., repeatedly posting the same comment or comments that are simply advertising/promoting a service or product.

6. Break the law or encourage others to do so. This includes respecting copyright and fair use laws. If you are talking about somebody else's work, reference this or the person, and where possible include a link.

The page administrators reserve the right to not post or remove any comments at any time, for any reason. Repeat offenders will be blocked from posting. If you have feedback or would like to report an inappropriate comment for us to review, send an email to publicrelations@cherokeek12.net .

All statements and viewpoints expressed in the comments are strictly those of the commenter alone, and do not constitute an official position of the Cherokee County School District unless they are posted by the original author (who is an authorized representative of the District) or by a subject matter expert responding on behalf of the District.