

Social Media/Electronic Communications Guidelines and Procedures

Introduction

West Chicago Elementary School District 33 recognizes the importance of using social media as a communication tool and extension of the classroom. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist District employees in navigating the appropriate use of social media and other electronic communication tools in their professional and personal lives. Social media refers to any form of online publication where end users post or engage in conversation and includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, podcasts, virtual worlds and social networks. District employees are expected to thoroughly read and understand the specified terms of use publicized by the social media or network service being considered.

When using social media/electronic communications, all staff are expected to serve as positive and appropriate role models for the District and students. It is vital that staff maintain professionalism in their interactions with students and the community.

Considerations when using Social Media/Electronic Communication

Transparency – All social media/electronic communication between District employees and the targeted audience, should be considered part of the District archives, a matter of public record, and/or may be viewed by others, or subject to FOIA requests, etc. As a public school District, we are expected to maintain openness, visibility, and accountability with regard to all communications.

Professional - All social media/electronic communication from District employees to the targeted audience should be written or communicated in a professional manner representing West Chicago School District 33. This includes word choice, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards, integrity, and excellence that are expected from every District employee. Communications are expected to be courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike in manner.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Student Safety - District 33 employees should not, under any circumstance, post offensive comments about individuals, or the district in general. Negative comments about people may amount to cyber-bullying and could result in disciplinary action.

District 33 employees should not post or allow to be posted, confidential student or employee information online or in any electronic format.

District 33 employees must confirm student(s) do not have a [Media Release Refusal](#) form on file before posting pictures of individual or groups of students. (*Policy #7:340-AP1-E2*)

It is recommended that District employees use the highest level of available privacy tools to appropriately control access for sites used professionally, for instruction, and for personal use.

Keep in mind that social media sites can change their privacy policies and standards at any time, putting posts intended to be private in the public domain.

Social Media Guidelines for District 33 Employees

A. Personal Use

District employees are personally responsible for content they publish, pictures they post, or dialogue they maintain, regardless of the medium, for the life of the content. No posting by a District employee should compromise the professionalism, integrity, and ethics in their role as a West Chicago Elementary School District 33 professional.

The line between professional and personal relationships can be blurred within a social media context. District employees should exercise good judgement and common sense. In order to maintain professionalism, it is recommended that District employees:

- refrain from using District contact information (email, address, phone, etc.) when using social media for personal use.
- refrain from connecting with students via personal social media.
- refrain from using district equipment or the district network as primary tools for maintaining personal accounts.

B. Instructional/Professional Use

Social media networks are powerful teaching and communication tools that can add great value to classroom instruction. Teachers are encouraged to use social media tools where appropriate in addressing an educational goal of the classroom.

Setting Up an Account

- Inform your building administrator (or designee) when creating social networks for classroom use and make sure parents are aware of the use and educational purpose.
- Use district contact information (email, address, phone, etc.) for creating and maintaining accounts.
- Abide by the user guidelines set by the social media site.
- Treat the social media network like a classroom. Monitor closely the interactions between students and deal with inappropriate use immediately.
- Maintain professional interactions at all times.
- Link back to school and district web sites
- All school and district sponsored social media should include the following disclaimer (if allowable by social media site): *We encourage users to interact with articles, blogs, reviews and multimedia features. District 33 schools do not accept responsibility or association with fans, followers, and or equivalent. User reviews and comments that include profanity, personal attacks, inappropriate comments or material, or violate our social media guidelines will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any policies governing this site.*

Posting and Monitoring of accounts used for Instructional Use

- Administrator of account will be responsible for all content
- All postings of student work, photos, names, and videos must comply with the District 33 Media Release Policy (*Policy #7:340-AP1-E2*).
- In the course of monitoring the social media sites, any improprieties are to be reported to the appropriate account administrator immediately.

Two-way communication

Social media provides a platform for two-way communication. Should account administrators decide to engage in two-way communication, please adhere to the following:

- Frequent monitoring of social media commentary will be done by the designated account administrator.
- Comment moderation, when offered, will be utilized.
- Response to external commentary is at the discretion of the account administrator.
- Comments that require immediate action due to mandatory reporting, threats, bullying, etc. need to be captured, removed and reported to the appropriate building administration.
- Responses to external comments should represent the organization.

Social Media Guidelines for District 33 Schools

In an effort to build community and increase engagement, District 33 is committed to maintaining a social media presence to communicate with its various stakeholders including students, parents, community members and alumni.

Setting up an account

- Authorization must be obtained for building sites from the Department of Technology.
- Each school is responsible for administering their desired social media presence.
- The building principal or account administrator will be in charge of building-based social media.
- Department of Technology will provide a standardized username and password to the building principal or account administrator.
- The username and password will be shared with the Community Relations Specialist, who will also contribute content.
- District 33 Logo must be included on the school's social media site
- Each social media site must include links back to School and District web sites
- Use district contact information (email, address, phone, etc.) for creating and maintaining accounts.
- Abide by the user guidelines set by the social media site.
- All school and district sponsored social media will include the following disclaimer (if allowable by social media site): *We encourage users to interact with articles, blogs, reviews and multimedia features. District 33 schools do not accept responsibility or association with fans, followers, and or equivalent. User reviews and comments that include profanity, personal attacks, inappropriate comments or material, or violate our*

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Posting and monitoring

- Social media is most effective when used frequently and monitored closely for input.
- The general philosophy of District 33 is that our website provides a semi-static information environment, whereas the use of social media will be a dynamic platform to enhance our communications. It is at the discretion of the account administrators to establish the frequency and degree of this form of communication.
- Posts may include items such as: news, school events, daily happenings, calendar entries, videos, audio, student and staff accomplishments, board/district level actions, and items relevant to education in general. Posts must be positive (or neutral) and should not attempt to share information that is controversial, offer criticism or opinion without guidance from the Superintendent, Principal, or Community Relations Specialist.
- All postings of student work, photos, names, and videos must comply with District 33 **Media Release Policy** (Policy #7:340-AP1-E2).
- In the course of monitoring the social media sites, any improprieties are to be reported to the appropriate account administrator immediately.
- Account Administrators are expected to monitor the social media and networking tools being utilized in the educational setting. The posting of content should be structured and monitored to ensure appropriateness.

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- Frequent monitoring of building-based social media commentary will be done by the designated account administrator.
- Comment moderation, when offered, will be utilized.
- Response to external commentary is at the discretion of the designated account administrator.
- Comments that require immediate action due to mandatory reporting, threats, bullying, etc. need to be captured, removed and reported to the appropriate building administration.
- Responses to external comments should represent the organization.

Social Media Guidelines for District 33 School-Based Groups (*Athletics, Student Council, Band, Orchestra, etc.*)

Setting up an account

- Authorization must be obtained for school-based groups from the building administrator.
- The District 33 Logo must be included on the group's social media site.

- Each social media site must include links back to School and District web sites.
- Use district contact information (email, address, phone, etc.) for creating and maintaining accounts.
- Abide by the user guidelines set by the social media site.
- Maintain professional interactions at all times.
- The username and password for each official school-based group's social media site must be provided to the building administrator and the Director of Technology.
- All school and district sponsored social media will include the following disclaimer (if allowable by social media site): *We encourage users to interact with articles, blogs, reviews and multimedia features. District 33 schools do not accept responsibility or association with fans, followers, and or equivalent. User reviews and comments that include profanity, personal attacks, inappropriate comments or material, or violate our social media guidelines will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any policies governing this site.*

Posting and Monitoring of accounts

- Account Administrator will be responsible for all content.
- All postings of student work, photos, names, and videos must comply with District 33 **Media Release Policy** (Policy #7:340-AP1-E2).
- In the course of monitoring the social media sites, any improprieties are to be reported to the appropriate building administrator immediately.

Two-way communication

Social media provides a platform for two-way communication. Should account administrators decide to engage in two-way communication, please adhere to the following:

- Frequent monitoring of building-based social media commentary will be done by the designated account administrator.
- Comment moderation, when offered, will be utilized.
- Response to external commentary is at the discretion of the designated account administrator.
- Comments that require immediate action due to mandatory reporting, threats, bullying, etc. need to be captured, removed and reported to the appropriate building administration.
- Responses to external comments should represent the organization.

Disclaimer Required

When a District employee publishes content as a representative of the District to or on any website outside of a District-sponsored site, he/she should use the following disclaimer: "The

postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent West Chicago School District 33 policy, strategy, or opinion.” The disclaimer in itself does not exempt employee from personal and professional responsibility.

All District employees are to respect all applicable copyright, fair use, and disclosure laws. It is expected that employees of West Chicago School District 33 will not make or post disparaging, discriminatory, defamatory, confidential, threatening, libelous, obscene, or slanderous comments about the District, its employees, students, or parents. Do not use West Chicago School District 33 district or school logos, or other District branding on personal social media sites.

Failure to do so could put you in violation of existing District policy and at risk of disciplinary action.