



# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY TEMPLATE FOR EDUCATION



## ABOUT THIS TEMPLATE

This template is intended for use as a starting point for school systems drafting a social media policy. The information was compiled from several sources including the Cities of Seattle, WA, and Arlington, TX; the States of Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas; and school systems in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and New York. As each school system is different, this template should be modified to fit the needs of your district.

# INTERNAL POLICY

## Purpose

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for [District name], the “District”. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, District departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The District encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the District and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

The District has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on its behalf on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

Social media is defined as any form of online publication allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and Flickr

## Acceptable Use

### Personal Use

All District employees may have personal social networking, Web 2.0 and social media sites. These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. Following this principle helps ensure a distinction between sharing personal and District views.

District employees must never use their district email account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking, Web 2.0 or social media site.

The following guidance is for District employees who decide to have a personal social media, Web 2.0 or social networking site or who decide to comment on posts about official District business:

- State your name and, if relevant, role, when discussing District business
- Use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and don’t reflect or represent the opinions of the District for which I work.”
- Even with strict privacy settings, when posting online comments that are related to the District, staff should act as if all posts are in the public domain.
- Do not access personal social media profiles from school computers, on school networks, or during work hours.
- The District discourages staff members from ‘friending’ current students on personal social media accounts.

### Professional Use

All official District-related communication through social media, Web 2.0 and social networking outlets should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with the District’s communications policy, practices and expectations. Employees must not use official District social media, Web 2.0 or social networking sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities.

District employees should be mindful that inappropriate usage of official District social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites can be grounds for disciplinary action. If social media,

Web 2.0 and social networking sites are used for official District business, the entire District site, regardless of any personal views, is subject to best practices guidelines, and standards.

Only individuals authorized by the District may publish content to an District website or social media profile.

## **Approval and Registration**

All District social media sites shall be (1) approved by [contact]; (2) published using approved social networking platform and tools; and (3) administered by the contact or their designee.

## **Oversight and Enforcement**

Employees representing the District through social media outlets or participating in social media features on district websites must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in District social media sites, blogs, or other social media features.

Information must be presented following professional standards for good grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity and accuracy, and avoid jargon, obscure terminology, or acronyms.

District employees recognize that the content and messages they post on social media websites are public and may be cited as official District statements. Social media should not be used to circumvent other district communication policies, including news media policy requirements.

District employees may not publish information on district social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information about students or staff
- Copyright violations
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM

## **Records Retention**

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the District and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to [applicable public records statute]. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (ex., digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.
- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e. ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.
- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.

- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g. PDF).
- Each employee who administers one or more social networking sites on behalf of the District has self-service, read-only access to search and produce relevant social media records to fulfill public information and legal discovery requests as needed.

The District utilizes an automated archiving solution provided by ArchiveSocial to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill the above record retention requirements. The District archive is available at: <http://archivesocial.com>.

## EXTERNAL POLICY

The following guidelines must be displayed to users on all social media sites or made available by hyperlink

### **Moderation of Third Party Content**

This district social media site serves as a limited public forum and all content published is subject to monitoring. User-generated posts will be rejected or removed if possible when the content of a post:

- is off-subject or out of context
- contains obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest
- contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information
- contains offensive terms that target protected classes
- is threatening, harassing or discriminatory
- incites or promotes violence or illegal activities
- contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
- advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual
- promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates

### **Public Records Law**

District social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to district business, including communication posted by the District and communication received from citizens, is a public record. The Department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for social media content.

### **About the author of this template**

ArchiveSocial enables public entities to safely and effectively utilize social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn. ArchiveSocial is the industry's first archiving technology providing 100% authentic capture of social media for compliance with state and federal records laws such as FOIA. It provides a legal safety net, and eliminates the time and effort required to respond to public records requests. ArchiveSocial is completely hosted and requires zero IT deployment. It serves as a cost effective offering for any sized public entity, and provides the public sector's easiest and most comprehensive solution for managing records of social media. ArchiveSocial is based in Durham, North Carolina.



# ArchiveSocial

Social media archiving for education

Additional papers, articles, and free trial offer available at [archivesocial.com](http://archivesocial.com)