



Turtle River School Division - Administrative Procedure

Section B – School Administration Social Media Guidelines for Staff

The following guidelines are intended to help staff use social media safely, responsibly, and successfully.

If you intend to use social media for instructional purposes, you must inform your principal of the intended use and provide them with the associated usernames and passwords. The account must be created using your TRSD staff account only.

Classroom and social media accounts are viewed as extensions of the school and must align with the mission, vision, and values of Turtle River School Division. If any concerns arise regarding a classroom account, the principal will address activities that may negatively affect school staff, students, or the reputation of the school division.

Each time you communicate, whether it is in person or on social media, you influence perceptions of yourself, your profession, your school, your division, and public education. Staff are expected to exercise sound judgement and due care when using social media both on and off duty.

- Staff are strongly encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between personal and professional social media use, ideally by having separate accounts for each purpose.
- Electronic communication with students should be for educational purposes or school-related matters, and sharing personal information with students should be avoided or minimized.
- Posting images or content that promotes or advertises alcohol, drugs, or nicotine products is prohibited on classroom and school accounts and is strongly discouraged on personal accounts.
- Staff are strongly discouraged from using a personal social media account to communicate with students and parents. Instead, refer them to an educational account or TRSD email for communication, avoiding personal or private messages.
- Texting students and parents is discouraged. If texting is deemed necessary, the staff member is encouraged to store the text communication. Text messages should be used exclusively for sharing school or school-related information.

Maintaining professional boundaries on social media is essential to upholding public trust and ensuring that relationships with students remain professional.

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- Social media interactions should demonstrate professionalism and reflect the following values: caring, co-operation, honesty, inclusivity, respect, and responsibility.
- Use a formal and professional tone when communicating with students or others via social media.
- Never share information with students online that would be inappropriate in a classroom or school/community setting. What is unacceptable in the classroom is also unacceptable on social media.
- Keep your posts positive and avoid engaging in negative or critical conversations online.
- Re-tweets, likes, and favourites are often perceived as endorsements, so exercise caution when interacting in this way.

Staff should avoid online interactions with students on social media platforms that are not specifically dedicated to educational purposes.

- Staff should not issue or accept student friend requests or follow individual students on social media.
- If you have a classroom account for sharing important curricular information, students may follow the account, but there is no need to follow them back. Instead, encourage students to use tools, like hashtags, to facilitate following their online conversations related to a specific area of study.

Safety is the top priority when posting information on line. Always respect and protect the privacy and confidentiality of student information.

- Familiarize yourself with the privacy settings of the social media platform you are using. These settings can change without notice, so review them regularly, especially after platform updates.
- Ensure privacy settings are appropriate and safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of students and their work.
- Student assessment information must not be shared on social media.
- Never disclose confidential information about the school, students, or colleagues on social media.
- Take extra care with students for whom the principal has identified custody or safety concerns.

At the discretion of administration, school social media accounts may be managed by one or more staff members. Communications from these accounts should maintain a consistent voice and be positive in tone.

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Staff who create personal, professional, classroom, or school social media accounts are responsible for monitoring them regularly, at a frequency they determine. Aim to update official school accounts at least weekly, if possible.

To keep content fresh and timely, it is important to develop a comprehensive social media strategy that includes the following elements:

- Who: Define responsibilities for content creation and management, such as generating posts, taking photos, obtaining authorization for their use, and uploading content to social media platforms.
- What: Specify the types of posts, such as classroom or program highlights, school or division-wide announcements, informational updates, or celebratory content.
- When: Set a schedule for posting content, accounting for both scheduled events and quieter periods when pre-planned content can be shared.
- How: Establish criteria for posts, including whether to use school-specific or stock photos, ensuring appropriate tone, securing necessary photo authorizations, adhering to copyright regulations, and determining which platforms are best suited for each type of content.

To effectively monitor comments and posts:

- Promptly remove or delete posts and comments that are inappropriate, contain personal or irrelevant information, if allowed by the platform.
- In some cases, posts or comments may need to be reported to an administrator for further investigation.
- Adjust your privacy settings to receive notifications when you are tagged or mentioned in posts or photos. Remove tags or posts that may reflect poorly on you, and consider responding thoughtfully before closing comments, balancing censorship with responsible digital citizenship.
- Forward social media notifications to your email or use another method to track mentions and activity about you online without needing to log in to social media accounts directly.
- Develop a clear protocol for archiving posts in a meaningful and organized way for future reference.

TRSD's Acceptable Use of Technology and Networks outlines the types of information staff should avoid posting online to ensure the safety of students and staff.

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- Tagging students in photos or posts is not permitted.
- Individual head-and-shoulder photos of students should generally be avoided and may only be used with a signed permission form.
- Group or action photos and video clips of students may be posted, provided no individual names are included and parental permission has been confirmed for each member of the group. (Parental permission is typically collected through the Student Registration Form at the start of the school year.)
- Individual staff photos may be used only with the prior consent of the staff member.
- Consent is not required for photos or videos taken at public meetings or events. However, students without consent must be excluded or have their faces blurred.
- When a list of students is published in local newspapers, the information is considered public domain, allowing the division or schools to identify award winners by first and last name, provided no accompanying photos are used.
- Permission from both the student and the parent is required before posting student work, and the work should only be identified by the student's first name.

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