

Tippecanoe School Corporation Administrative Guidelines

7540.05 - SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose for Social Media Guidelines

The Tippecanoe School Corporation recognizes the need to adapt to modern methods of communication. To this aim, the TSC has adopted the following guidelines to provide direction for employees when participating in online social media activities. These guidelines are based on the district's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Employees should review and become familiar with the Acceptable Use Policy and Acceptable Use Guidelines before participating in online social media activities.

The Tippecanoe School Corporation does not violate employee freedom of speech legal standards, but employees should know that there are limits to these legal standards. For example, school corporations may discipline employees for online postings that substantially disrupt or can reasonably be foreseen to substantially disrupt school operations. Any conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects the TSC may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The TSC Social Media Guidelines, however, do allow employees to participate in online social activities both personally and professionally and the TSC will not violate the legal rights of any employee.

When accessing, creating, or contributing to any blogs, wikis, podcasts, or other social media for classroom or corporation use, employees must adhere to these guidelines.

What is Social Media?

Social media is 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, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing Sites (YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr, Tumblr, Vine, Instagram, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Diigo, Delicious, Pinterest)
- Podcasting and Vodcasting
- Interactive Online Games

Personal Responsibility

Employees with a personal online presence should be mindful of the information they post. Online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that are used in face-to-face interaction. Even if information is deleted, it may still be stored on a site's server for a longer

period of time. Employees should know that content generated by employees could reflect positively or negatively on the corporation.

Employees are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the appropriate security settings for any social media (personal or professional) that they use. Employees should adjust the settings for all social media to assure that any personal content may only be viewed by the employee's intended audience. It is important also to keep in mind that even if one's privacy settings are set properly, it is still possible for anyone to see an employee's online content, regardless of whether the employee intended for them to see the content. For example, if one enables settings such as Facebook's ability to allow "friends of friends" to view one's content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.

Employees may not use email, text messaging, instant messaging, or social networking sites to discuss with a student a matter that does not pertain to school-related activities. Appropriate discussions would include the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club, or other school-sponsored activity. Electronic communications with students should be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients, not to just one student, except where the communication is clearly school-related and it is inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, emailing a message about a student's grades). These guidelines do not apply to communications between family members and participants in civic, recreational, or religious organizations.

Social media friendships should be conducted with caution with parents or guardians of students.

Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community should 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 should never represent themselves as speaking for the Tippecanoe School Corporation unless clearly authorized to do so. If the corporation is a subject of the content, employees should be clear and open about the fact that their views do not represent those of the corporation or fellow employees. Employees are encouraged to use a disclaimer such as, "The content on this site is my own and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Tippecanoe School Corporation."

Professional Responsibility

Social media in the classroom is an extension of the physical classroom. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate through social media if used for instruction. Employees are encouraged to use existing corporation-provided toolsets to interact with students.

If posting photographs of students taken at school or at a school-based activity on social media, employees should avoid using photographs of students who have not submitted the prescribed usage waiver. When posting photographs of students who have submitted the usage waiver, employees should only identify students by their first name.

In addition, Federal and State confidentiality laws forbid schools and their employees from using or disclosing student education records without parent consent (see Policy [8330](#)). Education records include a wide variety of information; posting personally identifiable information about students is not permitted. Staff members who violate State and Federal confidentiality laws or privacy laws related to the disclosure of confidential student or employee information may be disciplined.

School Logos

Employees must obtain written permission from the Coordinator of Communications before using any corporation logo or image. Employees must obtain written permission from a building principal before using any school logo. School social media pages managed by school administrators should utilize the official school logo that is used consistently in other types of media. School social media pages should strive to have a common 'look and feel'.

Copyright and Fair Use

Employees using social media should follow copyright and fair use guidelines. Sources should be cited when quoting. Information may be shared with others by linking to the source and using embedded content. If a hyperlink is used, staff should confirm that the link goes where it should and that the content is appropriate.

H.R. 4577, P.L. 106-554, Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000
47 U.S.C. 254(h), (l), Communications Act of 1934 as amended
20 U.S.C. 6801 et seq., Part F, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended
18 U.S.C. 2256
18 U.S.C 1460
18 U.S.C. 2246

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