

Guidelines for the Use of Social Media

Geary County Schools USD 475 recognizes the importance of online social media networks as a communication and e-learning tool. Social media sites are powerful communication tools that have become integrated into everyday life. They also can have a powerful impact on organizational and professional reputations. Using social media networks presents a new set of options for achieving communication and classroom objectives, and Geary County Schools recognizes the value of innovation using new technology tools to enhance the learning experience. Social media networks also have great potential to connect staff, students, parents and community to the important work taking place within our schools. At the same time, the District recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies.

These guidelines address employees' use of publicly available social media networks including (but not limited to) Wikis, Social Networks (i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Edmodo), Photo and Video Sharing sites (i.e., YouTube, Instagram, Flickr), online forums and virtual worlds.

To help you identify and avoid potential issues and unintended consequences, we have compiled these guidelines that employees are expected to follow (as specified in our Network/Internet: Acceptable Use Policy). Educational employees have a responsibility to maintain appropriate employee-student relationships, whether on or off duty, and regardless of the form the relationships take (in school, away from school, online, etc.).

District/Professional Use of Social Media

Ask yourself why: The first and most important step to take before you establish a social networking site representing your school or district office is to ask yourself several key questions:

- Why do you want to be engaged in a social media network?
- What information do you need to share, and is this the most effective platform on which to share the information?
- Do you have the staff capacity to maintain the social media network in a timely fashion?
- Who will do the work?

If you feel confident that your answers create a case for the use of social media for district business, then you are ready to move forward.

Act on behalf of the district: The “@usd475.org” address attached to your name and/or email implies that you are acting on behalf of the District and, as such, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner.

Protect confidential information: Regardless of whether you post as a private individual or district employee, you must make sure you do not disclose confidential information about students, parents or employees as specified in the **Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA)** **Health Insurance Provider Protection Act (HIPPA)** or other relevant legal guidelines. Employees who do share confidential information do so at the

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risk of disciplinary action or termination. If a parent has requested that their student be "opted out" from identification/photos/video/etc., that opt out extends online. In addition, caution should be taken when identifying students by their full name online, or providing other identifiable information that would jeopardize their personal safety.

Respect the law: When posting, be aware of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the district, as well as the legal consequences for violating those rights. In addition, be mindful of the laws governing defamation, discrimination and harassment.

Follow terms of use and privacy: Be aware of the social media site's terms of service and privacy policy.

Teach Digital Citizenship: Students involved in social media for classroom use should be made aware of their role as digital citizens.

Identify acceptable and unacceptable activities on social media networks: Be very clear about the rules of engagement with those who visit your site. In addition, district employees who manage social media networks on behalf of their school/department must not participate in political activities, campaigns or offer political comments on their district media site. Consider posting the District's Rules of Usage statement on your page:

1. All posting of comments on this page are at the discretion of the page administrators. The intent of this policy is not to prevent any certain type of comment from being posted, but to protect the privacy and rights of USD 475 staff and students. 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 conflict with the rules established by the district regarding Internet access and social media practices.
2. We welcome and encourage your input on the USD 475 (Name of the page created) - however, we will not leave up postings that:
 - Break the law or encourage others to do the same. This includes adherence to copyright and fair use laws. If you are using somebody else's work, please reference the source.
 - Contain abusive or inappropriate language. This includes remarks that are racist, homophobic, and sexist as well as those that contain obscenities or are sexually explicit.
 - Easily identify students and/or staff in defamatory, abusive, or generally negative terms.
 - Do not show proper consideration for others' privacy or are considered likely to offend or provoke others.
 - Are spam – i.e. repeatedly posting the same comment or comments that are simply advertising/promoting a service or product. Let's leave the focus of page postings to center on USD 475 only.
3. The page administrators reserve the right to remove any comments at any time, for any reason.

Utilize social media tools to supplement, not replace, traditional classroom and parent communication tools: As pervasive as access to electronic devices is amongst students, educators should be mindful that not all

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students have this form of access. The use of social media tools for educational purposes should supplement tools available to all students. They are not to be the exclusive means for providing instruction or facilitating conversation. The same consideration must be given to the fact that all our parents may not have access to these tools either, and that social media sites should not be the exclusive means of parent communication.

Use common sense-and follow FERPA -when identifying students online and in social media: Employees must be mindful of FERPA guidelines when identifying students in social media networks, and should use common sense when doing so.

Be transparent: Your honesty or dishonesty will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are posting about your work, use your real name and identify your employment relationship with the District. Be clear about your role if you have a vested interest in something you are discussing. If you participate in social media networks that are not work-related, be sure to state in very clear terms that the views expressed are the employee's alone and do not represent the views or beliefs of USD 475. However, also be mindful that perception can become reality, and many district patrons may not see the distinction.

Make it easy for people to find you: Increase exposure for your social media account by using your school or department name in the title and avoiding acronyms. In the section describing your school or department, include a statement that acknowledges your affiliation with the Geary County Schools USD 475.

Procedures

The voice of USD 475: Although each school or department operates its own social media outlet, all District social media accounts are a voice for our district. A central database compiled by the Communications Department ensures continuity in social media. Schools and teachers who use social media accounts as part of their communication strategy must provide the names of social media administrators as well as their phone numbers and e-mail addresses on a "Social Media Account Form" to their building administrator, who will send that information to the Communications Department. Accounts should be created using your USD 475 email account. In the event of an emergency this information will be helpful if the administrator of the page is not available to take care of the emergency in a timely manner. This information will be kept strictly confidential and used only for access during emergency situations.

In addition, official school and department social media outlets should be managed by a district employee/administrator, NOT external/volunteer representatives (i.e. PTA, PTO, booster clubs, etc.).

Parent Opt Out: Parents must be given the opportunity to opt their student(s) out of participating in social media sites. Social media sites are not to take the place of any regular communication about assignments nor should it be required.

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Report Abuse: KSA 38-2223, which specifies expectations for the mandatory reporting role of abuse for educators, applies in the social media world as well. If there is a suspicion of abuse or neglect that is witnessed or observed online, and which falls within the scope of KSA 38-2223 and BOE Policy 5117, an employee must follow established protocol for reporting the concern.

In addition, if incidents of cyber bullying or online threats cause suspicion or concern related to students, schools or work activity, employees should report concerns to their building administrator.

Digital Citizenship

Be accurate, and remember that manners matter: Make sure you have all of the facts before you post. Double-check everything for accuracy; write in complete sentences; and avoid jargon, institutional language and writing in all caps, as the content you post reflects on the District and your school or department. If you are unsure about the appropriateness of material to share on social media, **ask first!** Link to additional content on your Web site or the District's Web site. If you do make an error, correct it quickly. Posts typically include timestamps, and users will be able to see how quickly you respond.

Be a positive role model and be aware of the image you present: The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. Educational employees have a responsibility to maintain appropriate employee-student relationships, whether on or off duty. Inappropriate relationships with students in a virtual environment could expose the employee to disciplinary action or termination.

Both case law and public expectations hold educational employees to a higher standard of conduct than the general public. District employees are strongly advised to avoid friending students on personal social media networks. It could be viewed as inappropriate for District employees to communicate with current students enrolled in the District through social media, such as through electronic messaging or any social networking website.

USD 475 employees are encouraged to keep their personal lives personal even in the digital world where personal and professional can become blurred. District procedure prohibits employees from “friending” or “following” students.

Procedures also discourage “friending” or “following” parents of students. The following response is recommended when denying such requests.

As an employee of Geary County Schools USD 475, practice discourages me from 'friending' or 'following' students or parents. I would encourage you to 'like' our school/classroom/district account.”

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Take personal responsibility and use common sense: You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your ability to do your job. The District believes that all employees should understand what it means to be part of a public education institution, and that your professional reputation is reaffirmed daily. The ability to publish things that become cached on social network servers and never go away, and which can be forwarded endlessly - thus becoming public and permanent - should prompt you to think before you hit 'send.' Ask yourself, would I want my family to read this on the front page of the newspaper or circulated across the Internet?

Be aware perception can be reality: In online networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional, are blurred. Simply by identifying yourself as a district employee you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the District amongst the community, parents, students, the general public, colleagues and elected officials. Be ever mindful that in the minds of our patrons, you are a District employee whether on the clock or not. Your professional reputation is influenced daily, and it should be highly valued and protected.

Be respectful and keep your cool: Respect others' opinions and don't pick a fight online with someone who has an adversarial view. If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If someone else makes an error in fact, take advantage of the opportunity to correct misinformation and turn a negative into a positive. Finally, do not denigrate or insult others-including other schools or competitors-or comment on legal matters.

Be mindful of your own safety: Make full use of privacy settings available on social media networks. Know how to use moderating tools if available. Be cautious about using check-in programs to indicate the location of your posting. Don't list your home address or telephone number. Astute criminals can quickly piece together information you provide which opens you up for theft of property or identify, or potential harm to yourself or a child.

Add value: There are millions of words in the English language. The best way to get yours read is to write things that people will value. Communication associated with our District should help fellow educators, parents, students, employees and the community engage in our work to increase student achievement and be fiscally responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, do their jobs, solve problems or understand education better, then its adding value.

Complaints, Investigations, Violations, Discipline, and Appeals

USD 475 investigates and responds to all written reports of violations of its Social media, Network/Internet Acceptable Use policy. Complaints and investigations will be handled in the same manner as prescribed in the

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USD 475's Board of Education Policy relating to Discrimination. Violation of USD 475's social networking expectations shall be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, transfer, dismissal or termination.

Sources: Sources referenced in the development of these social media guidelines include: University of Michigan, Ball State University, American Institute of Architects, Via Christi Health, Center for Technology in Government, Colorado State University, Sam Houston State University, United States Air Force, Guilford County Schools, Kodak, Kansas State University, Ohio State University Medical Center, Greteman Group, Minnetonka Public Schools, Wichita Public Schools.

Facebook Guidelines for Teacher Usage

Facebook can be a very powerful communication or educational tool for today's society. Teachers in Geary County Schools USD 475 are encouraged to embark in the social media world and leverage these tools with the proper guidance. The following guidelines have been established to provide teachers direction on the appropriate use of Facebook in the classroom.

Personal Use of Facebook

USD 475 employees are encouraged to keep their personal lives personal even in the digital world where personal and professional can become blurred. District procedure prohibits employees from "friending" any student on their personal Facebook account. Procedures also discourage "friending" parents of students. If you have a personal Facebook account, the following response is recommended when denying such requests.

Sentence for staff to respond to "friend" requests on their personal Facebook page:

If you are a student or parent requesting to be my "friend" on Facebook, please do not be surprised or offended if I ignore your request. As an employee of Geary County Schools USD 475, our policy discourages me from "friending" students or parents on my personal Facebook page. I would encourage you to "Like" my teacher page, school page and/or the Geary County Schools USD 475 page.

Utilize Facebook to supplement, not replace, traditional classroom and parent

communication tools: As pervasive as access to electronic devices is amongst students, educators should be mindful that not all students have this form of access. The use of social media tools for

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educational purposes should supplement tools available to all students. They are not to be the exclusive means for providing instruction or facilitating conversation. The same consideration must be given to the fact that all our parents may not have access to these tools either, and that social media sites should not be the exclusive means of parent communication.

Facebook Teacher Page Procedures

When using Facebook as a part of your official duties as a teacher in Geary County Schools USD 475, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Facebook groups for grades K-8th or students under the age of 13 should be used as a communication tool with parents only. Facebook pages for grades 9th – 12th or age 14 and above can be a communication tool with parents and/or students, as well as a teaching tool with students. Students in 8th grade are allowed to be on the Facebook page but the communication needs to be directed at parents. This is aligned with the Facebook rules that individuals must be 13 to be on Facebook.
- All Facebook pages with any designation that associates that page with USD 475 should adhere to the USD 475 Social Media Guidelines.
- If you would like to use Facebook with a particular class, or group of students, parents, organization, or club you will need to fill out a Social Media Account Request Form.
- The Social Media Request form is approved by the administrator of your building.
- A Facebook profile should be set up using your district provided email address “@usd475.org”
- Create your Facebook page with your usd475.org profile.
- Reference the Facebook for Educators document for help.
- All posts should be from the page and not your personal/professional profile.
- A school related photo of yourself, school logo or USD 475 logo should be used as the profile image.
- When building a page you must identify the page in the page description area as an official classroom or organization in “Geary County Schools USD 475”.
- Students need to understand their role as a digital citizen to usage of Facebook in the classroom.
- You must send parents a social media opt out letter.
- Visitors to the Facebook page should be invited to “Like” the page not “Friend” the page.

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- The *Geary County Schools USD 475 Facebook Rules for Usage* must be posted on any page created. (see below)
- If you already have a Facebook page created for your classroom it will need to adhere to the USD 475 Social Media Guidelines mentioned above, and you must send a **Social Media Request form to your school administrator.**
- The creator of the page is responsible for monitoring content on the page and deleting any posts that violate the Rules for Usage.
- USD 475 investigates and responds to all written reports of violations of its Social Media Guidelines and, Network/Internet Acceptable Use policy. Complaints and investigations will be handled in the same manner as prescribed in the USD 475's Board of Education Policy relating to Discrimination. Violation of USD 475's social networking expectations shall be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, transfer, dismissal or termination.
- If you currently have a page established for work purposes, please be sure that it meets the above criteria. Failure to follow the established guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

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Purpose of Facebook Privacy Settings

To control **how much** information about you is shared and **who** it is shared with.

Keeping Private Things Private

Make sure to customize your privacy settings on personal profiles so that they reflect the amount of information you want to share with people who know you from school. We want you to be able to continue to use and enjoy Facebook as you always have without blurring the line between your personal and professional lives. It is extremely important to realize that anything shared online has the potential to be seen by members of your professional life (students, parents, and administrators) and put you in an embarrassing situation.

One should avoid circulating anything online that would be uncomfortable if your students saw it. Facebook filters, no matter how they're set, do not guarantee ultimate privacy. For example, someone might take a photo of you and post it on their own pages — and they may have no filters at all. USD 475 cannot possibly police your personal Facebook pages, but we ask out of professional courtesy to carefully consider these basic privacy items.

- Remember your name and profile picture are always public
- Contact Information (under the About tab)
- Set to posts and information to “Only Me” or “Friends”
- Do not list your home addresses or personal information
- Privacy settings should be checked and updated routinely
- The Privacy Tab is a great feature to become acquainted with
 - “Who can see my stuff” is a features that allows you to see your profile as others will
- Timeline and Tagging tab
 - Set all items to: Friends
 - Enable the **review** of tags for your timeline and others
- Apps tab
 - Set all items to: Friends
- Photos
 - Change individually by photo or album
- Activity Log
 - Your activity log is a list of your posts and activity, from today back to the very beginning, and is a great way to monitor everything someone could potentially see

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about your Facebook presence. On this list you can review the privacy of every single post, share, like, etc.

Edmodo Guidelines for Teacher Usage

Edmodo can be a very powerful communication or educational tool for today's families. Teachers in Geary County Schools USD 475 are encouraged to embark in the social media world and leverage these tools with the proper guidance. The following guidelines have been established to provide teachers direction on the appropriate use of Edmodo in the classroom.

Edmodo Guidelines

- Your Edmodo site needs to be registered to the district Edmodo site.
 - Navigate to the **subdomain page** usd475.edmodo.com
 - Enter your existing username and password
 - Click "**Login.**"
 - If it's your first time logging into the subdomain, you'll be prompted to enter a School Code, which you can get from your administrator.
- You must read and understand the Terms of Service. You can access these at Edmodo.com.
- You must obtain advance written consent from parents or guardians.
 - When obtaining consent, you must provide parents and guardians with Edmodo [Privacy Policy](#); you may use the attached sample permission slip.
- You must keep all consents on file and provide them to us if we request them. For more information on [COPPA](#).
- As a teacher, you represent and warrant that you have permission and authorization from your school and/or district to use the Services as part of your curriculum, and for purposes of COPPA compliance, you represent and warrant that you are entering into these Terms on behalf of your school and/or district.
- You promise to only use the Services for your personal, internal, non-commercial, educational use, and only in a manner that complies with all laws that apply to you.

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- Your use of Edmodo is subject to Edmodo's Acceptable Use Policy, (see attached) which outlines what you can and cannot do.
- Students will use the district subdomain to log in
 - Navigate to the **subdomain page** usd475.edmodo.com
 - Enter existing username and password
 - Click "**Login.**"
 - If asked to verify your Group Code, the teacher needs to associate it with the subdomain.

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Edmodo ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Effective date: January 4, 2013

Remember that your use of Edmodo's Services is at all times subject to the Terms of Service, which incorporates this Acceptable Use Policy. Any terms we use here without defining them have the definitions given to them in the Terms of Service.

Everybody

1. You represent, warrant, and agree that you will not contribute any Content or User Submission or otherwise use the Services or interact with the Services in a manner that:
 - a. Infringes or violates the intellectual property rights or any other rights of anyone else (including Edmodo);
 - b. Violates any law or regulation;
 - c. Is harmful, fraudulent, deceptive, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, or otherwise objectionable;
 - d. Jeopardizes the security of your Edmodo account or anyone else's (such as allowing someone else to log on as you on the Services);
 - e. Attempts, in any manner, to obtain the password, account, or other security information from any other user;
 - f. Violates the security of any computer network, or cracks any passwords or security encryption codes;
 - g. Runs Mail list, Listserv, any form of auto-responder or "spam" on the Services, or any processes that run or are activated while you are not logged into the Services, or that otherwise interfere with the proper working of the Services (including by placing an unreasonable load on the Services' infrastructure);
 - h. "Crawls," "scrapes," or "spiders" any page or portion of the Services (through use of manual or automated means);
 - i. Copies or stores any significant portion of the Content;
 - j. Decompiles, reverse engineers, or otherwise attempts to obtain the source code of the Services.

You will not use an Access Code that you're not authorized to use. For example, if you're a student, this means you won't use any Access Code that was not directly given to you by your teacher. If you're a parent or guardian, only use your own child's Access Codes.

You will keep your Access Code private and not disclose any Access Code to any individual not authorized to receive that Access Code, and you will at all times use your best efforts to protect the security of your Limited Access Group. Do not post Access Codes in any public way (including on any

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widely-accessible internet page or in hard copy on a bulletin board, etc). If you're a teacher, after all students in your class have joined your Limited Access Group for such class, you will use the functionality of the Services to lock that Limited Access Group, preventing additional members from joining (you may temporarily lift this lock to add additional authorized users of new students join your class).

You will not register for the Services as any category of user that you do not legitimately qualify for. For example, if you're a student, you will not register as a teacher, parent, administrator, Publisher, or any other category Edmodo offers now or in the future.