

Bibb County School District Social and Electronic Media Guidelines

Purpose

Bibb County School District (BCSD) understands the importance of teachers, students, and parents extending the collaborative learning environment by utilizing continuously evolving technology. This technology includes email, video sharing tools, mass communication means such as REMIND, social media, blogs, and many other online tools through which people connect and share information. The District also understands the importance of providing an avenue to share the successes of staff and student involvement in athletics, clubs, and organizations using social media. With this in mind, the District has developed the following guidelines to provide directions for staff and students when participating in social and electronic media activities.

Reasons for these guidelines:

1. These guidelines are meant to protect the student, staff, and District.
2. The lines between public/private and personal/professional can be blurred in the digital world.
3. Even personal social media can fall under staff and student conduct policies and be grounds for disciplinary action and part of a staff evaluation.
 - a. [Internet Acceptable Use](#) and [Electronic Communications Acceptable Use Regulation](#)
 - b. [Student Code of Conduct](#)
 - c. [Employee Handbook](#)
 - d. [FERPA](#)

General Guidelines

Some of these guidelines are general to accommodate the differences in online venues while maintaining a universal code of conduct. In all electronic communication, employees and students should respect the Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines. All communication should be transparent, accessible, and professional.

1. **The communication is transparent.** ALL electronic communication between staff and students/parents should be transparent. As a public school district, we are expected to maintain openness, visibility, and accountability regarding all communication.
2. **The communication is accessible.** ALL electronic communication between staff and students/parents should be considered a matter of public record, part of the district archives, and/or may be accessible by others.
3. **The communication is professional.** ALL electronic communication from staff to students/parents should be written as a professional representing the Bibb County School District. This includes word choice, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a Bibb County School District professional. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike in manner.

School District, School, or School Activity Affiliated Social Media Accounts

- Schools and student activity organizations are encouraged but not required to develop a social media presence.
- New social media accounts should be requested by contacting the school principal, department head, or site administrator for initial approval. Once initial permission is given, final approval

must be received from the Chief Communications Officer for the school district before creating the account.

- No social media account created to represent a school or school-related activity shall be deleted without approval from the Chief Communications Officer for the school district.
- District, school, or school activity social media accounts should have a minimum of two certified or other approved employees as administrators on the account.
- All social media accounts representing the district, school, or a related activity should have the proper settings in place and reference the official Social Media Disclaimer for the account type. See Social Media Account Set-Up Guide for setting suggestions.
- Social media should promote the accolades of the school staff, students, and related activities.
- Social media can be used to share information with parents and the community; however, in general, all social media activity should relate to positive information news sharing. Please use REMIND and school email to share official or policy-driven information with parents and students.
- Content should be monitored as often as necessary—no less than once per day.
- If the designated site manager cannot actively monitor private messages, set up an automatic response message directing individuals to alternate means of contacting the school or group, preferably through the Let's Talk platform.
- Private messages or conversations initiated through social media accounts should be moved to school email if the conversation becomes a back and forth or specific to a student or staff member. Only answer and communicate using Private Messaging for general information like public school operating questions, event ticket sales or times, or referral to a specific department for assistance. Never provide information protected by FERPA or HIPAA through social media.
- Students should not be allowed to post unless closely monitored by the staff and under the school-approved site. This use should be approved by a school administrator.
- Only post about school-related content.
- Accounts should not be used personally by any of the users given access.
- The accounts should use official approved logos.

Employee Communication with Students and Families

- District employees should only communicate with students and parents using their assigned district email address if discussing a situation specific to the individual student.

- District employees may use REMIND as a means for group communication with classes, teams, clubs or organization members, and parents to announce information that is relevant to all in the group.
- Private messages sent from parents and students to district employees on their personal email accounts, personal social media accounts, or district-approved social media accounts should not be continued on those accounts. Direct those conversations either to a district email account or the REMIND group communication tools.

Personal Profiles (Employees)

- Remember your association and responsibility to BCSD in online social environments. Whether you identify yourself as a school employee or not, you are likely associated with your job within the district. Your profile and related content should be consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students in terms of the school district's image, purpose, mission, and affiliated programs.
- No confidential identifying personal information of students or co-workers, such as full names, addresses, or phone numbers, should appear on blogs, wikis, or other social media. Pictures should only be posted if all persons in the photo have given consent to publish.
- When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself, make sure you select an appropriate image. Also, remember not to utilize protected images.
- Avoid defamatory comments, obscene material, or proprietary information.
- Do not post or state anything that you would not say at the front of the classroom.
- Assume whatever is posted/written will be seen by everyone.
- Consider whether postings will adversely impact your ability to be a role model for students.
- Never accept a friend request from a student or send a student a friend request. If a friend request is received from a student, notify the administration for information purposes.
- Set privacy settings to control individuals who will have access carefully. Limit the types of information that your friends can view. Consider creating friend lists and assign different permissions for different lists.
- Remember that anything you publish will be public for a long time – protect your privacy.
- During a crisis/emergency associated with the school/district, staff should NOT post or ask for information via social media, texting, or email. During these situations, rumors can spread quickly, and staff should be using this time to ensure the safety of those in their care.

Personal Profiles (Students)

- Be aware of what you post online. Social media venues are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Do not post anything you wouldn't want friends, enemies, parents, teachers, or a future employer to see.
- Follow the school's code of conduct when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions; however, do it respectfully. Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and inappropriate pictures. Do not share your password with anyone besides your parents.
- Do your own work! Please do not use other people's intellectual property without their permission. Be aware that it is a violation of copyright law to copy and paste others' thoughts. It is good practice to hyperlink to your sources.
- How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity.
- Please refer to the [Internet Acceptable Use Policy](#) and accompanying [Electronic Communications Regulation](#) for appropriate use of technology while on the district network and if using school-provided technology such as school-issued laptops.

Updates and Changes

BCSD reserves the right to make changes and modifications to these guidelines as necessary throughout the year. Please check this page regularly for the most current version.