MCPS Staff Procedures for Social Media

Missoula County Public School District recognizes many of our staff as active social media users. As a school district, we are also incorporating social media as part of our communications strategy. Employees are encouraged to use websites and social media to provide information, support communication and collaboration, publish student work for authentic audiences, and develop in students the skills necessary to participate online in a safe and productive manner.

Social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, and YouTube. It also includes blogs, comments on websites, discussion forums, and any other online activity communicating with other users.

MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Forward Thinking, High Achieving.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation and the reputation of MCPS, and respects the relationship between teachers, students, and community members.

These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet that are in place at Missoula County Public Schools.

Common Sense Tips for Posting to Social Media

- Learn to use your privacy settings in all personal and professional accounts. Always assume default settings will make your profile and any content you share publicly accessible.
- You are personally responsible for the content you publish online, including personal comments, links, photographs, audio or video, and content created by other users that you choose to share or re-post.
- Be mindful that once posted online or sent in email, you cannot take it back. In most instances, deleting or untagging content will not make it disappear.
- Remember, even if you share your content with a limited number of people, nothing prohibits your contacts from sharing the information or photos you post.
- Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Avoid insulting others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community, or other school districts. Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or other inappropriate content. Your online behavior should reflect your professionalism. It is best practice to never post anything that would call your professional reputation into question.
- Represent the District and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Avoid posting, sharing, commenting, or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community.
- Before you post or share, ask yourself if you would be comfortable seeing that content in the local news.
- Periodically do an Internet search for your email address and name and monitor your digital footprint. Anything you've publicly posted can be seen, so be careful where you leave your name.

Laws & MCPS Policies

- We encourage responsible online participation and expect employees to adhere to existing policies covering discrimination, copyright/fair use, and harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention. Teachers and students should be aware that fair use protections for the physical classroom may not extend to online publishing.
- Respect the privacy and rights of both colleagues and students. Confidential student or personnel information should not be posted online. Be sure not to violate any provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Do not post photos or videos that contain identifying information concerning any students without prior parental consent. Check with school secretaries for opt-out information.
- Employee websites and accounts are the property of MCPS. Websites should only link to appropriate educational or informational resources. Sites and links should not be used as forums to express political commentary, to promote a business or organization, or to sell products for personal gain.
- Do not use any school logo or image without permission.
- Consult your principal before creating any social media account, blog or website that represents the school, classroom, or student group.
- Use of your district email for informal or personal purposes is permissible within reasonable limits. Use your personal email address on personal social networking sites and for other personal social media matters.

Communicating with your School Community

- Employees must exercise great care in connecting with students and parents on any social media channels. Use discretion and carefully consider the guidelines provided by the district before friending, following, or communicating with students and other members of the school community.

- Employees are never under any obligation to accept friend or follow requests from any student or parent, nor are they obligated to use personal social media accounts to communicate with students and families or participate in district projects.
- Employees who are connected to students via social media should understand they may be granting those students access to all content in their social media profiles and ensure students are protected from exposure to inappropriate content or content that might compromise the employee's professional reputation.
- Employees are also responsible for ensuring any relationship and all dialogue with any student or school community member is kept professional in nature. Immediately report any inappropriate communication received from a student. This is as much for your protection as for the student's protection. Any content or communication which would be inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.

If you remember nothing else…

With each communication, ask yourself if it's something you would feel comfortable being printed in the newspaper, read by parents, colleagues, or the School Board. Always assume any communication or posted content can easily end up in the public realm.

Guidelines for publishing on Websites & Social Media

Missoula County Public Schools encourages teachers and administrators to develop and integrate websites, social media platforms (such as Facebook or twitter) and other web-based tools into the school and/or classroom. These tools can be used to enhance communications and teaching & learning.

Developing a website

All MCPS teachers, administrators, departments, school teams, and affiliated clubs and/or organizations are eligible and encouraged to develop webpages on the **MCPS website platform (Schoolwires**). The platform was launched in summer 2012. Webpages are developed in cooperation with the school's website director. Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites can be used (but note these sites may be blocked and <u>not</u> viewable to students while at school because of filtering). If using these sites, educators should link to them from their Schoolwires webpage on the school's website. Publishing guidelines included in this brochure should be applied to all webpages/social media sites.

Publishing Guidelines

The role of websites and social media in education is to provide information, support communication and collaboration, publish student work for authentic audiences, and develop in students the skills necessary to participate online in a safe and productive manner.

All websites and social media services used for classroom/instructional purposes are considered extensions of the classroom and all classroom, building and District expectations, rules, and policies apply to these online spaces. All work in these online spaces must be in support of educational activities and student achievement. Employee websites and accounts are the property of MCPS and should not be used as a forum to express political commentary (which might influence the outcome of an election), sell or market products for personal gain, etc. Websites should link to <u>only appropriate instructional resources</u> and/or to other school webpages. Links to non-school webpages should serve to promote educational activities or classroom resources that are informational. Links should not promote or benefit a business, organization, individual or for-profit event that has no connection to the district/school or that does not provide services to area youth. Remember, if you would not post it in your classroom space, don't post it online!

Follow all copyright laws. *Many books, pictures, and electronic files are the property of their creators (the material is "copyrighted") and can only be used with permission or by paying a fee. In some cases copyrighted material may be used for educational purposes covered by the "fair use" guidelines. Do not copy and include copyrighted materials on your website or in computer files you create and/or upload, except as permitted by the "fair use" guidelines. These guidelines can be found in every media center in the District.*

Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement & Annual Notice Opt Out

<u>All students</u> must have on file a signed **Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement** in order to participate in any web-based or social media project.

In addition, teachers must check with their building records clerk/secretary to see if parents have submitted a *Student Information Opt Out Form*. If parents have requested a comprehensive opt-out (A) or limited opt-out (B or C), the following directory information for that student **may not** be published online:

Comprehensive opt-out (A): student's name, address, email address, photograph, date of birth, dates of attendance, grade level,

participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height members of athletic teams, or awards and honors received;

Limited opt-out (B): student's name, likeness, or voice in any *videotape, television, motion picture, audio recording, or still photograph production* (either print, video, or web-based);

Limited opt-out (C): student's name, address, and telephone number.

Parent/Guardian Notification: Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents/guardians regarding their student's participation in any online extension of the classroom and provide the information necessary to view their student's online work. It would be helpful to communicate include the teacher's district voice mail and email address (for contact information); guidelines for parent/guardian participation in the online portion of the class (if this is available); and how the use of social media supports the learning objectives of the class.

Administrator Notification: While teaches have the primary responsibility to moderate/monitor and web-based extensions of the classroom, administrators also have a role in monitoring such sites. Teachers *are expected to provide their principals with the URL of any instructional page/website/forum/blog/etc. created for posting content about or created by students (please note that this does not include personal pages/sites).* Just as principals are to know what is occurring in the physical classroom, principals are expected to view web-based extensions of the classroom periodically and notify the teacher of any content is discovered that is contrary to these guidelines or otherwise may compromise student privacy and/or safety.

Grades K-8 Guidelines

Students' Names K-8: Students and student work should be identified only by the student's **first name or an appropriate alias**. There is a delicate balance to be struck between developing students' sense of authorship and protecting their privacy.

Images/Photos/Video of K-8 students: Images/Photos/Videos of students – individually, in small groups, or whole class – should be such that related text/audio does not identify which student is which. Images meant to signify individual students and their work should take the form of a representational image or avatar.

Student Works:

> K-8: All student work must be *moderated* by the teacher prior to publication online. The teacher will direct students to revise works, as necessary, to ensure that works are appropriate for the online extension of the classroom prior to publication.

> If a social media tool allows public commenting, public commenting must be either turned off or all such comments must be *moderated* by the teacher, who will delete comments that violate district policies or are otherwise inappropriate for the classroom.

> All student work published online must follow MCPS copyright policy, and teachers and students need to be aware that fair use protections for the physical classroom may not extend into the online environment. The building teacher librarian is a resource for answering questions regarding copyright and fair use.

Grades 9 – 12 Guidelines

Students' Names 9-12: Students and student work may be identified by the student's first name and last name or an appropriate alias. There is a delicate balance to be struck between developing students' sense of authorship and protecting their privacy.

Images/Photos/Video 9-12: Images/Photos/Videos of individual students, small groups, and the whole class are allowed; related text/audio may identify which student is which.

Student Works:

> 9-12: All student work must be *monitored* by the teacher, who will direct students, as necessary, to revise works so that they reflect MCPS academic expectations.

> If a social media tool allows public commenting, public commenting must be either turned off or all such comments must be *monitored* by the teacher, who will delete comments that violate MCPS policies or are otherwise inappropriate for the classroom.

> Again, all student work published online must follow MCPS copyright policy, and teachers and students need to be aware that fair use protections for the physical classroom may not extend into the online environment.

Questions? Please contact the MCPS District Office at 728-2400, ext. 1023.