



## South Middleton School District Appropriate Use of Social Media Guidelines

### Introduction

The South Middleton School District recognizes that access to technology in school provides students and adults in our learning community with greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and global citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills.

To that end, this Appropriate Use of Social Media Guidelines statement outlines the expected behaviors for students and adults while using school technologies and personally-owned devices on campus, and especially while accessing the school district's network.

- Students and adults in our learning community are expected to exhibit good behavior and respectful conduct online and offline.
- Misuse of social media can result in disciplinary action.
- The South Middleton School District makes a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security while online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of social media technologies.

The district encourages students and adults in our learning community to responsibly use social media and social networking tools to productively connect with others, share educational resources, create and curate educational content, and enhance the classroom experience. We ask that you first post school and district news through social media outlets already in place, like our district websites, Facebook, Twitter, student information, notification, and learning management systems, sites, and apps. Other options must be formally considered and approved at the administrative level.

While social networking is fun and valuable, there are some risks to keep in mind when using these tools. In the world of social media, lines are often blurred between what is public or private, and personal or professional. We've created these guidelines for you to follow when representing the school or district within virtual environments. See the South Middleton School District Policy # Acceptable Use Policy for Technology, for additional details.

### Social Media Expectations – Classroom Posters

Teachers are expected to post, discuss, and reference whenever appropriate, two social media classroom posters shown at the end of this document. The posters are instructional tools intended to remind teachers and students to develop safe and responsible habits when using social media. The acronym for the first poster is "**THINK**", and the second is "**SMART**".

- **THINK** – Encourages users to ask themselves to decide if the information they are about to share or post is: **True, Helpful, Inspirational, Necessary, and/or Kind**. If it does not meet this criteria, they are at risk for sharing potentially dangerous or hurtful information, and should rethink posting it.

- **SMART** – Reminds students and teachers when online: a) don't **Share** personal information, b) don't **Meet**-up with people you only know online, c) don't **Accept** files you didn't request, from people you don't know, d) verify a person, site, information is **Real**, e) **Tell** when something makes you uncomfortable.

**PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING:**

**A. Use Good Judgment –**

- Use the classroom social media posters as a reminder of sensible and responsible online behaviors
- Always follow the district's code of conduct rules and the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) (Policy 815) for technology. Social media use is subject to compliance with the AUP.
- Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you have shared on your social network is public information.

**B. Be Respectful –**

- Treat others the way you would want them to treat you or a member of your family.
- Be respectful, positive and considerate even if you disagree when commenting on a post or sending a reply, especially in a public vs a private setting.

**C. Be Responsible and Ethical –**

- Unless you are specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the school as a spokesperson, you should state that the views expressed in your postings, etc. are your own. Stick with discussing school-related matters that are within your area of responsibility.
- Do not use the school or district seal or logo (*or trademarks of other entities*) without prior permission.
- Express a need and secure official district administrative level consent prior to creating any classroom level account separate from those sanctioned at the district level. When approved, make students and parents aware of how this account will be used. When interacting online be open about your district affiliation (role/position) and limitations and be a responsible representative of the district.

**D. Be a Good Listener –**

- Keep in mind that one of the biggest benefits of social media is that it gives others another way to talk to you, ask questions directly, and to share feedback.
- Be responsive to others when conversing online. Provide answers, thank people for their comments, and ask for further feedback.
- Always listen and encourage feedback in addition to commenting.

**DON'T SHARE THE FOLLOWING:**

**A. Confidential Information**

- Do not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential on any public website. This includes a birth date, address, and cell phone number.

- Never assume any online conversation, chat, message, etc. is private.

## **B. Private and Personal Information**

- Protect your safety by limiting the type and amount of personal information you provide online. Avoid sharing details about personal schedules or situations.
- NEVER give out or transmit personal information of students, parents, or co-workers.
- Always respect the privacy of the school community members.
- Do not share student names, photographs or work samples.
- Teachers shall always comply with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) when using social media. Teachers shall not share or disclose any personal, identifiable information about students on social media sites.

## **PLEASE BE CAUTIOUS WITH RESPECT TO:**

### **A. Images**

- Respect brands, trademarks, copyright information and/or school images and logos.
- Do not post pictures of students for whom parents declined permission to do so. When posting other student photos do not include their full name.
- Do not post pictures of others (including co-workers, etc.) without their permission.

### **B. Other Sites –**

- A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks, sites, and apps involve passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. Do not repost content without reading it, first.
- Pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer before clicking onto unfamiliar links. The purpose is to protect you and the district's network from possible malware.
- When using Twitter, Facebook and other tools, be sure to follow their printed terms and conditions.

### **C. What If You Don't Get It Right?**

**With the click of a mouse and five minutes of time, something online can “go viral”**

- Apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.
- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make it clear what you've done to rectify the situation.
- If you have made a mistake (*e.g., exposing private information or reporting confidential information*), immediately notify the Building Principal so the school can take the proper steps to contain the damage and minimize the impact.

## NETIQUETTE

- Always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Recognize that infused with the valuable content online is content that is inappropriate, incorrect, and unmonitored. Users our filtered network and trusted sources when conducting research via the Internet.
- Students should be reminded **not to post anything online that you wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see**. Once something is online it can be shared and spread in ways never intended, far beyond the timeframe initially established, and can come back to haunt you down the road.

## PERSONAL SAFETY

If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes you concerned for your personal safety, bring it to the attention of an adult (*teacher, staff, parent*), immediately.

- Never share personal information, including phone number, address, social security number, birthday, or financial information, over the Internet without adult permission, and then only appropriately within trusted and secure socket sites.
- Recognize that communicating over the Internet brings anonymity, with associated risks. Be careful not to fall prey to predators posing as someone else to take advantage of you.

## CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated! Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, name calling, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Don't be mean, send emails, or post comments with the intent of scaring, luring, hurting, or intimidating others. See the South Middleton School District Policy #249, Bullying/Cyberbullying, for more information.

Choosing to engage in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (*physically or emotionally*) another person, will result in disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying or cyber harassment can be a crime and will be reported to the authorities, accordingly. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained by others.

## EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE USE

I will:

- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that I am expected to follow face-to-face.
- Treat social media carefully, and alert appropriate personnel if I encounter related problems.
- Alert a teacher or other adult if I see any threatening, bullying, inappropriate, or harmful behaviors or content online.
- Follow the guidelines and posters that help to protect my safety.
- Use good judgment when making decisions while using social media.
- Avoid using social media in any ways that could be harmful to myself or others.
- Refuse to engage in activities that lead to or may be considered cyberbullying, cyber harassment, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.

- Refuse to engage in activities that circumvent school safety measures and filtering tools.
- Refrain from using language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users are expected to exercise good judgment when engaging in social media activities. It is your responsibility to consult your Building Principal or Administrator if you have any questions about the meaning of these guidelines.

### **Limitation of Liability**

The South Middleton School District will not be responsible for damage or harm to persons, files, data, or hardware related to social media activities.

### **Violations of the Appropriate Use of Social Media Guidelines**

Violations of these guidelines may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

- Suspension of privileges
- Removal from positions of leadership within The South Middleton School District.
- For employees, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- For students, disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from The South Middleton School District.
- Additional consequences to be determined by Administration.

I have read and understood this official SMSD Appropriate Use of Social Media Guidelines, and agree to abide by it in conjunction with the following district policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy for Technology (Policy #815)
- Electronic Communications Devices Policy (Policy #237)
- Bullying/Cyberbullying (Policy #249)

As well as any district policies referencing expected code of conduct for students and adults.

### **Terminology:**

- **Social Network** – a digital footprint of online associates, affiliations, and collaborators; the act of interacting with other internet users with common interests.
- **Social Media** – the tools used to access, maintain, and grow your social network.

Before you...



**THINK!**

**T** = Is it True?  
**H** = Is it Helpful?  
**I** = Is it Inspiring?  
**N** = Is it Necessary?  
**K** = Is it Kind?

The Internet is forever.

Don't develop a bad reputation.

# S

## Stay Safe

Don't give out your personal information to people / places you don't know.



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# M

## Don't Meet Up

Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Always check with an adult you trust.



# A

## Accepting Files

Accepting emails, files, pictures or texts from people you don't know can cause problems.



# R

## Reliable?

Check information before you believe it. Is the person or website telling the truth?



# T

## Tell Someone

Tell an adult if someone or something makes you feel worried or uncomfortable.



Follow these SMART tips to keep yourself safe online!

Top Tip based on resources from www.parentsnow.co.uk