Staff Guidelines for Use of Electronic/Social Media

North Kansas City Schools encourages staff to use electronic media to communicate with parents, students and school communities. We have created guidelines for the use of such media for several reasons.

1. Clear expectations protect students, staff and the district.
2. Lines between public/private and personal/professional are blurred in the digital world.
3. Even personal social media sites can fall under the Staff Conduct board policy and can be grounds for disciplinary action and part of your evaluation.

Board Policy GBH – Staff/Student Relations

Board Policy GBCB – Staff Conduct

Does the communication pass the TAP test?
Electronic communication should always be **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible, and **P**rofessional as defined below:

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 in regards to 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 North Kansas City School District. This includes word choice, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of an NKC Schools professional. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike in manner.

Representing NKC Schools
Boundaries between personal and professional identity are often blurred online. Staff members are welcome to identify themselves as NKC Schools employees on both personal and professional pages. However, staff members should be aware that with that statement, they serve as representatives of the district in all communications shared online.

In addition, privacy settings are not always clear and change often. Staff members should not expect that messages, comments or posts remain private. As such, all communication should reflect well on the communicator as an NKC Schools professional.

Best Practices for Use of Social/Electronic Media

The following are suggestions to assist you in creating, maintaining or participating in the various forms of communication and social media sites available. Remember: your social networking pages are a reflection of you as a professional and as a member of the North Kansas City Schools team.

1. Do not post or state anything that you would not state at the front of the classroom.
2. Avoid defamatory comments, obscene material or proprietary information.
3. Assume whatever is posted/written will be seen by everyone.
4. Do not discuss students or other employees.
5. Consider whether postings will adversely impact your ability to be a role model for students and a representative of NKC Schools.
6. Never accept a friend request from a student on your personal Facebook profile. If a friend request is received from a student, notify the administration and parents.
7. Students may follow public school pages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. However, you should not follow current students' personal pages.
8. Allow parents/guardians an opportunity to join any social media pages created by staff that students will be joining. Staff should be fully transparent with the content being shared with students.
9. Do not tag, mention or otherwise connect students' personal social media accounts in your posts and communications. As educators, we cannot increase students' digital footprint without their consent.
10. Set privacy settings to carefully control individuals who will have access to your personal pages. Limit the types of information that your friends can view. Consider creating friend lists and set different permissions for different lists.
11. Monitor your pages regularly.
12. Use strong passwords that are different than others used.
13. Be mindful that anything you publish will be public for a long time – protect your privacy.
14. **During a crisis/emergency situation associated with the district, staff should not share or ask for information via social media, texting, or email.** During these situations, strategic communication is key to maintaining the safety of all students and staff. Rumors can spread quickly and staff should be using this time to ensure the safety of those in their care.

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Communicating via School Social Media Accounts

Social media is a great tool for quickly sharing information with parents, students and school communities. Some of the most commonly used platforms for communication in NKC Schools include Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. We encourage staff to share the good news happening every day in our schools on social media.

Regardless of the specific social media platform, staff members who would like to create an account for professional, building or group/organization use should follow the guidelines below.

1. When creating a professional/school account, use your district email.
2. Only "follow" other school accounts and educational/news/professional/group-related accounts.
3. Turn off any private messaging features.
4. Include links back to your school website or other platforms to encourage visitors to visit those related pages.
5. Promote your social media pages by including links in your email signature line, posting on your website, including it in introductory materials, etc.
6. Connect with other district social media accounts by including links and tags in your posts.
7. Notify your building administrator and/or Activities Director (if sport/activity) of your plans to use social media for communication.
8. **Make sure to NEVER share about students who are part of the "No Media" lists (check with your building administrative assistants).** These students' families have opted-out of any media coverage, including photography, sharing names and inclusion in public directories, recognition, etc. Instead, share other images or ensure that students' faces cannot be seen. Best practice is to take a photo from an angle that hides student faces, rather than using "stickers" or editing photos to exclude any students.
9. If using student photos in "protected" spaces, you may use first names only to identify students. Examples include classroom activities, field trips, or any environment where outside visitors would normally not attend.
10. If using student photos in "public" spaces, you may use students' full names to celebrate recognitions or achievements. Examples include local awards and public recognitions.
11. Ensure that your privacy settings do not allow others to be able to post, tag, or add photos, videos or links to your social media pages without your prior approval.
12. Notify parents and students of your intent to use social media to communicate information in addition to your other methods (group/activity website, e-mail, formal letters, etc.).
13. If posting links to outside educational websites, please include the following disclaimer: "This page contains links to outside sources. North Kansas City Schools is not responsible for any content housed/published on those sites/servers."
14. Share with both students and parents the appropriate Social Media Guidelines. Discuss appropriate online behavior with your students.