

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

The Pickerington Local School District has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for PLSD students when participating in online social media activities, whether personally or in conjunction with a school assignment or other school-related activities. Although social media can be useful for many purposes, care must be taken to maintain an atmosphere of respect consistent with the behavior expected of students in school as outlined in Federal and/or state law, Board policy and school rules. In addition to reading and adhering to these guidelines, students should become familiar with Board policy EDE-1 (Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy for Students), which can be found on the Board website at <http://www.pickerington.k12.oh.us/districtBoardEd.aspx>. Students should also be familiar with the Student Handbook/Code of Conduct for the school(s) they attend.

What is social media?

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows end users to engage in multi-directional conversations in or around the content on the website. Examples of social media include Facebook, MySpace, Ning, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, wikis, and photo or video sharing.

Accountability

Students are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Because digital content lives in perpetuity, anything you publish will be public for a long time. Use common sense and adhere to the following rules when posting content online.

1. Don't post, do, say, or write anything on a social network that you would not want your parents to see or that you would not want to see on the front page of the local newspaper.
2. Don't misrepresent your identity online. If you are not willing to own your online comments, don't post them.

Privacy

Online postings and conversations are not private. Anything you post can be forwarded or shared with many others in just a few clicks. There are, however, steps you can take to safeguard your own privacy and that of others.

1. Exercise care with your privacy settings and profile content.
2. Be aware that people are not always who they claim to be. Many people provide false information about themselves and their backgrounds online. Therefore, students should not post confidential information or specific information about themselves or other students online. Students should not disclose any information online that could help someone contact them in person. Such information includes the student's last name, home address, phone numbers, email address, school name, schedules, photos, or videos.

Academic Use of Social Networking

All of the guidelines above apply to the use of social networking in the classroom as well. The same rules and policies that govern student conduct at school apply to social networking activity when social networking is used in conjunction with a class assignment or other school activities.

1. Students should not share their usernames or passwords for social networking websites with anyone other than teachers and parents. Students should also not log in to social media websites as another student or teacher.
2. Students accessing and/or using social media websites on school equipment should not download or install any software without prior permission from the teacher and should not click on ads, online competitions, surveys and/or other sites unrelated to the assignment(s).
3. Students using social media resources will treat these tools as a classroom or school space. Speech and images that are inappropriate for class and school are equally not appropriate for these online assignments. Students are expected to treat others and their ideas online with respect. If a student receives a comment on a blog or other social media website that makes them feel uncomfortable or is not respectful, they should report this to a teacher immediately and should not respond to the comment.
4. Assignments involving social media websites are like any other assignment in school. Students, in the course of completing these assignments, are expected to abide by policies and procedures in the Computer Network and Internet Acceptable Use Policy for Students. (see PLSD Homepage>Technology Department>Forms), the Student Handbook/Code of Conduct, and Board Policies/Guidelines (including but not limited to rules relating to plagiarism).

5. Violations of the Student Handbook/Code of Conduct, Board Policies/Guidelines and/or the Acceptable Use Policy while using social media websites may result in academic sanctions and/or disciplinary action. The term “academic sanctions” includes, but is not limited to, the reduction or loss of grade and applies regardless of a student’s location and/or the equipment being used at the time the violation occurred. The term “disciplinary action” includes, but is not limited to, notification to school administrators or law enforcement officials and may apply even if the violation occurs while a student is off campus.

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