

CIRCLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 375

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CIRCLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

At Circle Public Schools, we recognize that many of our staff, students, parents and community members are active social media users, and as such, as a school district we incorporate social media as a strategic tool for communication.

The purpose of the Circle Public Schools Social Media Guidelines is to help staff participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation, the reputation of Circle Public Schools, and that respects the relationship between staff and student.

For the purposes of this document, social media includes, but is not necessarily limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, ParentSquare, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube, and TikTok. It also includes blogs, comments on websites, discussion forums, and any other activity online involving connecting or communicating with other users. These guidelines complement but do not replace, any existing policies regarding complaints, the use of technology, computers, e-mail, and the Internet that are in place at Circle Public Schools.

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SOCIAL MEDIA PHILOSOPHY

Circle Public Schools' social media philosophy is to create an empowered online community for all who have a stake in public education in which we:

- **Unify Our Schools:** Circle Public Schools will use social media tools to update community stakeholders about district programs, services, awards or honors, curricular and extracurricular highlights, special events and opportunities to engage with our schools - while showcasing how we “Thrive in 375”.
- **Raise Awareness and Provide Reliable Resources:** Social media enables us to immediately reach audiences in more ways. This results in increased visibility within the community. Social media is about sharing information and it is common for the online community to take our messages and distribute them even further.
- **Engage Our Community:** Circle Public Schools will use our social media as an avenue for stakeholders to see ways tax dollars are used in our schools to increase opportunities and further student success.

GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS are those made through official channels, posted on a school account, or using the school/district name. All district, school, and extracurricular social media is created and monitored by the director of community relations and development.

Circle Public Schools staff who oversee social media sites should aim to:

- **Post Regularly:** Regular updates remind the public that we are a vital part of the community and help show the value of our online presence.
- **Be Engaging:** Share what makes your school unique and post important information in positive, fun ways. Distributing information in a non-engaging manner is the quickest way to be ignored in the social media landscape.
- **Encourage Interactivity:** Social media is a two-way street. We aim to connect with our page followers and respond quickly to any query received via social media sites. Consider content that's open-ended and invites a response. Encourage comments. Classroom and extracurricular group account creation and use is outlined below.

Classroom Communication

Classroom social media accounts are not allowed (private Facebook groups, Instagram, etc). All classroom communication should occur via ParentSquare and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Work with building secretaries to maintain a current do not publish list. If a student is on the do not publish list:
 - Do not share images with a do not publish student
 - Avoid taking group pictures that include the student. If unavoidable:
 - Cover the student's face with an emoji or blurred pixels
- To be featured on school and district media:
 - Email Sara Potter at spotter@usd375.org with the following information:
 - Brief captions with:
 - Who is in the image(s) &/or involved in the activity,
 - "Students from Teacher's Name second grade class..."
 - What is happening,
 - And if applicable, why is this taking place, or the purpose behind the activity.
 - Images to include on post
 - Students on the do not publish list should not be included—even with an emoji or blur.

Extracurricular Groups

- All active accounts should be associated with official district credentials as the administrator of the account.
- To register existing accounts, complete the [district social media account application](#). Once registered, you will receive credentials and further instructions.
- Profiles not updated in a regular, timely manner will be archived.
- Students must have written guardian permission and training to post on official social media accounts. Contact the director of community relations and development for more information.

If you are a Circle Public Schools staff member considering creating a social media presence to represent a district extracurricular group, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does an account already exist?
- Why do you want to be engaged on a social media platform?
- What information do you need to share and what is the most effective platform to share that information?
- Who will do the work?

If you feel confident that your answers create a case for the use of social media, complete the [district social media account application](#). Once approved, you will be contacted with account set-up directions.

Communicating as a Circle Public Schools Representative

- Be sure that all content associated is consistent with Circle Public Schools' values and professional standards.
- Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and Circle Public Schools' confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.
- Work with building secretaries to maintain a current do not publish list of students involved with your activity. If a student is on the do not publish list they should not be published on social media or ParentSquare.
- Be aware of current district hashtags and use when appropriate.
- Be aware of other school pages to tag and include in the post when necessary.
- What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social media on behalf of Circle Public Schools is an opportunity so please treat it seriously and with respect.
- Please follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites.
- Do not attack or insult those who disagree with you or Circle Public Schools. Be careful and considerate. Some opinions/criticisms do not necessitate a response. Only comment back when you can add value to the conversation or provide a reference to facts.
- Mistakes happen. Edit typos, be upfront and be quick with any corrections. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so when appropriate. Editing a typo does not need pointed out; omitting a student name from an award list should be pointed out an update was made once corrected. If you are unsure, contact your building principal or the director of community relations and development for guidance.
- If you are second-guessing yourself on content, do not post! If you are unsure, contact your building principal or the director of community relations and development for guidance.
- Do not insult others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community, or other school districts. Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or other inappropriate content. Avoid posting, sharing, commenting, or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information. Represent the district and the students and parents you serve in the best light.
- Stay positive. Your posts and comments can help build, support and enhance the Circle Public Schools community.
- The district monitors social media and will respond to content when possible. However, if something needs district attention, please notify Sara Potter at spotter@usd375.org as soon as possible.

GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Personal Communications are those made via personal social media accounts and should not associate themselves with, or impact the school/district. Perception is reality. In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. We believe our staff are our greatest ambassadors and encourage responsible participation in social networking sites. When identifying yourself as a Circle Public Schools staff member, the general public may associate your comments as comments on behalf of the district so remember:

- **POSTING DURING A SCHOOL CRISIS** is strongly discouraged. Refer all questions to official school communications.
- Identifiable student images should not appear on teacher's personal social media.
- Aim to represent yourself and the district, students and families you serve in the best light.
- It is your responsibility to ensure any relationship or dialogue with a student or parent/guardian is kept professional in its nature.
- Avoid posting, sharing, commenting or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information.
- Use your best judgment in deciding what to publish. You have sole responsibility for what you post online. If you would not want to publically voice it, it may be best to not post it.
- Consider when using personal social media during work hours that this may cause a misperception of how you are spending your work hours.
- Please consider the public forum you are participating in and act in a way that represents your personal and professional reputation. Express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner, bearing in mind that once posted, you cannot take it back. With the click of a button, other users can take a screenshot, re-post, or share your content with others. Nothing prohibits your contacts from sharing the information you post.

- You are personally responsible for the content you publish online or send in a private message. Content includes personal comments, links, photographs, audio or video, and content created by other users that you choose to share, send, or re-post. While these guidelines are not intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to comment upon the workplace, it remains good practice not to post content that would call your professional reputation into question.
- Respect all laws that govern educational information and communication, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Staff-Student Relations Circle Public Schools recognizes the role that communication and collaboration between staff and students play in the educational process and experience. The district further recognizes that the advancement of electronic communication and social media technologies creates greater opportunity for interactions between staff and students, and recommends these additional guidelines.

- Staff are not under obligation to accept a friend or follower request from students or parents/guardians or to use personal social media accounts to engage with or participate in district projects. In addition, you should bear in mind that depending on your account's privacy settings, everything you post may be publicly accessible to your students, whether you are connected to them or not.
- Private messages, as well as direct messages with one or more participants, are commonplace in social media. However, staff should not use social media messaging tools to communicate with students and/or parents/guardians and should instead use official tools (such as ParentSquare or district e-mail) for such purposes.
- Staff who are connected to or communicate with students via social media must understand they may be granting those students access to content in their personal social media profiles.
- Any content or communication generated either by you, or by a student, which would be inappropriate in the classroom should also be considered inappropriate when shared via social media or in private messages.
- The district recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances where a staff member's interaction with a student is a result of involvement in non-district activities or organizations.