

Victoria ISD

SOCIAL MEDIA PROCEDURES & EXPECTATIONS

PURPOSE

Victoria ISD recognizes the changing way staff, students and stakeholders communicate and obtain online information relating to the programs, campuses, and goals of the district online. Victoria ISD participates in social media platforms to reach our audience across multiple platforms and to be accessible to all. These procedures and expectations set guidelines for use of social media in an effort to ensure timely, accurate, and appropriate use of those online platforms to deliver clear, concise, and consistent messages on behalf of the school district.

APPLICABILITY

These procedures apply to all Victoria ISD employees.

I. Guidelines

- A. All official Victoria ISD, district, and campus social media platforms are considered an official extension of the school district's information and communications network.
- B. All school district/campus requests to develop and maintain social media sites must receive approval from the Campus Principal/Department Director, final approval from the school district Communications Department, and comply with these guidelines.
- C. It is the responsibility of the Communications Department to oversee the school district's official web presence via social media platforms. It is the responsibility of each Department Director and/or Campus Principal of any department/district campus approved to use social media, to appropriately coordinate the posts to their department's social media platforms.
- D. It is a joint responsibility between the Technology Department and Communications Department to administer archives (back-ups), security and monitoring measures. State law requires any social media platforms used by Victoria ISD to be archived by the District. If a social media platform cannot be archived, by law, it cannot be used.
- E. The school district will maintain official pages per each approved social media platform, which are to be created and maintained by the approved employees and their department directors and/or campus principal, to be overseen by the District Communications Department.
- F. Potential Uses for social media include, but are not limited to, information about extracurricular events, campus events, department events; campus and/or department activities, and issues. The use of social media during emergencies is highly encouraged; however, all information will come from Victoria ISD social

media accounts and should be shared across department and/or campus social media accounts.

- G. The use of social media must comply with applicable federal, state, and district procedures and expectations, and policies, as well as proper business etiquette. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), U.S. Constitution First Amendment, privacy laws, and information security policies established by Victoria ISD.

Due to COVID safety procedures in place, it is the responsibility of the Department Director/Campus Principal to ensure that all photos/videos are in line with current safety procedures in place. Example: students, staff, and visitors properly masked

- H. Wherever possible, links should direct users back to the district's official website for more information, forms, documents, or online services. Links should rarely direct users to an external website

Employee Code of Ethics

- a. Employees representing the district via district, department and/or campus social media platforms must always conduct themselves, as representatives of Victoria ISD and use the highest ethical standards:
- b. Respect the posts and opinions of our stakeholders; Keep interactions factual and accurate;
- c. Strive for transparency and openness in all social media use, never seek to "spin" or "embellish" information;
- d. Employees will, if needed, provide links to credible sources of information to support interactions;
- e. Employees will respect the established usage rules of the particular social media platform utilized (e.g. Facebook's user policy); and
- f. Employees will protect the district's privacy and internal permissions guidelines.

Employee Code of Conduct

- a. Approved employees can use district, department and/or campus social media accounts but must ensure each of the approved uses and sites adheres to the social media procedures and expectations for appropriate use and criteria, consistent with the branding, goals, and mission of Victoria ISD. If after 3-6 months, the social media account is not meeting the required criteria outlined below, it will be subject to management by Communications and/or deleted entirely, depending on its analytics

1. Post Frequently & Timely, according to the platforms below:
 - a. Facebook – 1 to 2 times a day
 - b. Instagram – 1 time a day
 - c. Twitter – 2 times a day
2. Each department's analytics will show when its audience is most active on each account for determining optimal times to post.
 - a. Do not repost the same information multiple times, but rather, change the image, video, text, and use hashtags or share the initial post to your page.
 - b. Each platform will require a different content strategy based on its audiences and style of language. For assistance in optimizing your social media content, contact the Communications Department.
3. Consistently engage with the public
 - a. Respond to appropriate questions, comments, and messages within a 24-hour timeframe. If the comment is not a question, consider whether not engaging/answering would be the best option. Contact the Communications Department for a strategic message for those that are not so clear.
4. Include relevant images or videos
 - a. Facebook posts with an *appealing image have an 87% interaction rate versus posts solely with text. *Appealing, meaning a high-quality graphic without any text on it. Be sure you are using appropriate images that you have copyright approval for.
5. The school district does not post on any external social media sites on behalf of Victoria ISD. The Communications Department will respond to misinformation shared on external social media accounts.
6. **Employees making comments on external social media sites must not represent or portray themselves as a school district employee authorized to speak on behalf of the school district.** Simply sharing the district/campus content, “liking” all posts, or commenting on posts is both allowed and encouraged. If an employee sees a comment that needs to be addressed, send the information to the department head and/or campus principal and the Executive Director of Communications. This does not in any way prohibit employees from exercising their first amendment right to free speech.
7. District employees are encouraged to help share, like, and engage with district-posted material to help increase our reach to the public. If employees choose to post information, photos, and videos about Victoria ISD using their personal social media accounts, they can do so but should avoid any posting that might be interpreted as an official statement made on behalf of the district, on behalf of your department/campus or that might compromise perceptions of your

ability to do your job in an unbiased and professional manner. *Please do not include your district title on your social media account.* A disclaimer from the Communications Department will be required to include in a location clearly visible to the public indicating you are operating and speaking on your own and any views or opinions expressed by you do not reflect Victoria ISD.

8. Employees cannot use the district/campus name, logo, images, or iconography to promote a product, cause, or political party, or candidate.
9. For social media accounts that will be including pictures inside classrooms, teachers must avoid including any visible sensitive student and/or classroom information.
10. Avoid disclosing student name tags.

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11. In line with FERPA, do not make any grades, assessments, or any other part of a student's educational record public. Pay particular attention to how you reply to publicly posted student work.
12. Turn off location services for your phone when taking pictures.

Violation of these standards may result in the removal of the employee's permission to post from social media platforms. The Executive Director of Communications retains the authority to remove social media information.

II. Social Media Guideline Disclaimer

If the individual department and/or campus allow public comments in their social media outlet(s), then Victoria ISD reserves the right to remove messages or postings in violation of the following

1. disclaimer about appropriate conduct, including:
 2. 1. Obscene comments;
 3. 2. Abusive, profane, or insulting language;
 4. 3. Attacks on an individual character (these complaints shall be referred to the appropriate District grievance policy);
 5. 4. Material that violates a student's privacy rights or is defined as bullying or harassment;
 6. 4. Materials violating copyrights, trademark right, or other intellectual property of any third party;
 7. 5. Comments unrelated to the topic of the forum or not within the scope of the responsibilities of Victoria ISD (or the specific departmental page);
 8. 6. Commercial promotions, endorsements of products, services, organizations or other entities, or spam; or

9. 7. Solicitation of funds;
10. 8. Comments that threaten to jeopardize any ongoing investigation;
11. 9. Content that implies, promotes, or encourages illegal activity;
12. 10. Sexual content; or
13. 11. Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion.
- 14.

Facebook profanity filters are not allowed to be used without consent from and receipt of the appropriate disclaimer to display provided by the Communications Department. If approved, these filters will come with a required disclaimer indicating the standards of participation and potential consequences, in a clearly visible location to the public.

All social media pages will ensure the disclaimer is visible and up to date. It will have verbiage around appropriate use of the forum, and potential consequences should users not abide by our requirements.

PROCEDURES

- A. Departments and/or campuses requesting to set up a new official department and/or campus social media account must have approval from their department director or campus principal and email their request to visdcommunications@visd.net.
- B. The District Executive Director of Communications will have final approval of all social media requests.
- C. If approved, the VISD Communications department will create the social media account(s). The account must be maintained by the admin with access to the account and will be put on a probationary period for at least 3 months to detect its success and use. A specific set of criteria will be enforced, and if not followed, the social media account and its content may be moved under the main Victoria ISD or campus account. The criteria are outlined above.
- D. The District Communications Department will maintain a list of all approved users, accounts, and a link to all social media pages. The district can only archive a limited amount of social media accounts at this time. Not all requests will be approved.
- E. Only district email addresses will be posted on the social media platforms. The use of generic email addresses, for example, visdcommunications@visd.net, is appropriate to create social media accounts. Employee district emails should not be used to create social media accounts.
- F. To the extent that design parameters of the host site allow, district and/or campus pages will conform to the following:
 - a. Be identified as an official VISD/Department/Campus posting;
 - b. Contain appropriate staff contact information;
 - c. Contain the District logo, Departmental logo, or Campus logo;
 - d. Have a link to the appropriate page of the District and/or Campus website;

- e. Include a disclaimer about our content expectations of acceptable comments and the three-step rule; and
- f. Specify that all content posted is subject to Texas Open Records laws.
- G. The Department Director, Campus Principal, and/or designees(s) will ensure the content of their social media outlet(s) is NOT deleted or edited until backing up or archiving has been accomplished. One alternative to editing existing content that is published by VISD staff is to simply add text to the existing post indicating a change or update has been made without making any changes to the existing content.
- H. The Communications Department and Technology Department will ensure regular backups or archiving are performed on all social media platforms.
- I. All content on any District social media outlets is kept in accordance with the District's records retention guidelines.

To Delete A Post:

The following procedure will be used if a post on a social media site does not comply with the district social networking guidelines.

No social media post will be deleted until these steps are followed:

1. The employee should contact a supervisor or director to make sure they agree the post needs to be deleted.
2. Take a "screen capture" of the entire "conversation thread" and email it to visdcommunications@visd.net. Call the Communications Department at 788-9300 to let them know you want to delete a post and have sent an email.
3. The Communications Department will determine if the post can be deleted.
4. The Communications Department or Technology Department must perform a "backup" of the social media page before a post can be deleted.
5. The Communications Department will delete the post after the page is archived and inform the requestor. No other employees are authorized to delete social media posts.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Executive Director of Communications, Department Directors, and Campus Principals will be responsible for enforcing these procedures and expectations.