Webster Groves School District
Est. 1868

Social Media Guidelines for WGSD Staff
Purpose
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WGSD staff members have an array of social media tools that they can use to communicate with students and families. Social media has great potential to create bonds and build community engagement. Staff members using social media technologies for professional purposes, however, need to operate within appropriate guidelines when communicating about school business.

These guidelines focus on assisting staff in using social media safely and responsibly, since mistakes can have serious consequences including confidentiality issues and litigation.

Social media platforms help us communicate in a variety of ways including
School good news – Facebook, Twitter, Youtube
WGSD news – Facebook, Twitter, Youtube
Job postings – Facebook, Twitter
Videos – Facebook, Youtube, Twitter
Parent resources --- Facebook, Twitter
Did You Know facts – Facebook, Twitter

Definitions
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Social media: communication, collaborative sharing, and reaching of others using websites, platforms, electronic resources, and/or documents.

Social networks: websites, apps, platforms, or services, such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter and/or Google +, allowing users to create customized profiles and form connections with other users. These tend to foster personal social contact among "friends", or via "likes" or "following."

Blogs: web logs or journals to which authors and/or users can post text-based, audio, or video content, and where users may be permitted to post comments.

Microblogs: websites, apps, platforms, or services, such as Twitter or Google +, that allow users to post short blog entries with text and/or graphic images.

Media sharing: websites, apps, platforms, or services, such as YouTube, Vimeo, or InstaGram, allowing users to post and share videos, audio files and/or photos as well as tag them to enable searchability.

Wikis: websites or documents, such as Wikipedia, edited collaboratively by a community of users who are granted varying levels of editorial control by the publisher.

Listserv, newsgroup: an email exchange where messages are broadcast to every member of a group at once.

Virtual worlds: web or software-based platforms, such as Second Life or MineCraft, allowing users to create avatars or representations of themselves, and through these avatars to meet, socialize and transact with other users. Such worlds can be used for social purposes, ecommerce, nonprofit fundraising, and videoconferencing.

When using social media, staff SHOULD...
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- Inform the principal when setting up an account and describe the intended use.
- Remember to maintain a professional demeanor. Maintain a clear distinction between personal and professional social media use and should have two separate accounts for these purposes.
- Remember that online behavior must reflect the same standards of professionalism, respect and integrity as face-to-face or written communication.
- Social media communications should have a consistent, positive tone.
- Remember that social media is by definition two-way communication—be prepared to answer questions, and deal with others who may not be polite.
- Keep copyright issues in mind, giving credit where credit is due: link to others' material rather than reposting.
- Make it clear that you're speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the district.
- Student groups or members of the public may create social media representing students or groups within the district. When staff, including coaches or advisors, choose to join or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as employees of the district. Staff are responsible for maintaining appropriate staff-student relationships at all times, including addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on such networks.
- When communicating electronically with students for educational purposes, staff members must use district-sponsored forms of communication (district-sponsored social networking sites). If a WGSD-provided communication method exists, staff should use the provided method.
- Use common sense regarding content—personality is fine, but if you wouldn't do something in your classroom, don't post it online.

When using social media, staff SHOULDN'T...
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- "Friend", "follow", or otherwise interact with students from personal social media accounts. Students may be 'friended' if they are 18 years of age, **and** have graduated from WGSD.
- Use district or building logos or images without permission.
- Post identifiable photos of students without parental consent. Safety is an overriding concern with information that's posted online. Always respect the privacy and confidentiality of student information. Staff must never disclose confidential information about the school, their colleagues and students.
- Identify, name, or "tag" individual students, or make obvious their location.
- Post images of coworkers without their consent.
- Create fake accounts or profiles that use another's name, likeness or other personal details. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators also may not share false or misleading information about other individuals on social media.
- Bully others by sending messages of an intimidating, threatening, or derogatory nature.

Personal vs. Professional Social Media
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A grey area exists between *personal* and *professional* use of social media. In general:
- If embedded in a district site, the account will be considered professional.
- Professional social media accounts should primarily deal with instructional, educational, or extracurricular program matters.

Legal

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Comments to WGSD-sponsored sites, such as its website, via blogs, online forums, etc., or social media sites, are welcome; we look forward to hearing from you. To promote respectful discussion, we request that users be courteous and productive, and avoid comments that are profane, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, inflammatory or otherwise objectionable. Blogs often foster debate of an issue; users are to engage in such discussion with respect for others and their opinions.

WGSD reserves the right to reject or delete comments for any reason, including but not limited to, comments that violate these guidelines, to determine in its sole discretion which submissions meet its qualifications for posting, and to remove comments for any reason, including but not limited to our belief that the comments violate these guidelines. Any submissions that fail to follow these guidelines in any way or are otherwise irrelevant will be removed.

WGSD has the right, but not the duty, to inspect, review, or retain electronic communication created, sent, displayed, received or stored on and over the School District's electronic network and devices and to monitor, record, check, track, log, access or otherwise inspect its electronic network and devices.

In addition, in accordance with the law, WGSD has the right, but not the duty, to inspect, review, or retain electronic communication created, sent, displayed, received or stored on User's personal computers, electronic devices, networks, internet, electronic communication systems, and in databases, files, software, and media that contain school district information and data.

Also, in accordance with the law, WGSD has the right, but not the duty, to inspect, review, or retain electronic communication created, sent, displayed, received or stored on another entity's computer or electronic device when users bring and use another entity's computer or electronic device to a WGSD location, event, or connect it to the district's network and/or systems, and/or that contains district programs, or district data or information.

The above applies no matter where the use occurs whether brought onto WGSD property, to district events, or connected to the district network, or when using mobile computing equipment and telecommunications facilities in protected and unprotected areas or environments, directly from home, or indirectly through another social media or internet service provider, or any other means. All actions must be conducted in accordance with the law, assist in the protection of the district's resources, ensure compliance with these guidelines, administrative regulations, or other WGSD policies, regulations, rules, and procedures, social media and internet service providers' terms of use, or local, state, or federal laws.

WGSD will cooperate to the extent legally required with social media sites, internet service providers, local, state, and federal officials in investigations or with other legal requests, whether criminal or civil actions.

Users are required to fully comply with these guidelines, as well as the district's Acceptable Use Policy.

It is the responsibility of all users to consider carefully what they post online, and when communicating with or "friending" any individual. WGSD reserves the right to access users' postings on public locations and on WGSD servers, hard drives, systems, and networks under the direction of law enforcement, a court order, a subpoena or other legal action or authority.

Users may not coerce others into providing passwords, login, or other security access information to them so that they may access social media or locations that they have no authorization to access. Users should note that information that they post on social media and designate as private can be accessed in litigation, can be distributed by their friends, and can be accessed in other various legal ways.

For help, support or ideas, get in touch with district Instructional Technology Director Tim Brown (brown.tim@wgmail.org), Webmaster Pat Weaver (weaver.pat@wgmail.org) or Community Relations Director Cathy Vespereny (vespereny.cathy@wgmail.org) .