



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MANATEE COUNTY

School Support Center
215 Manatee Ave. W.
Bradenton, FL 34205

Student Social Media Guidelines

The School District of Manatee County (SDMC) allows schools and the District Communications, Family, and Community Engagement Department to use online social media to improve communication among the District, families, students, staff and other members of the SDMC community. This document contains guidelines to ensure that participants in social media communications understand and follow procedures that will make the use of online social media a positive and productive experience for everyone involved.

A. Definitions

“Social media” include various Internet sites and technological tools that enable users to share information and resources easily. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other electronically transmitted communications. These media provide information from various published sources and allow for interaction through user-generated content.

“Technology” includes the Internet and any device used to access it or otherwise share information electronically, including, but not limited to, computers, notebooks, telephones, cell phones, personal digital assistants, pagers, MP3 players such as iPods, USB drives, wireless routers, or other wireless communication devices.

“District technology” is technology owned or provided by SDMC.

“Personal technology” is any device that is owned by the user or provided by a third party other than the District.

B. Representative Social Media Sites

These guidelines pertain primarily to social networking sites. Some examples include the following:

- Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>)
- Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>)
- YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>)
- Instagram (<http://www.instagram.com>)
- Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>)
- Blogs (Web Logs)
- Any District-related social media account or page

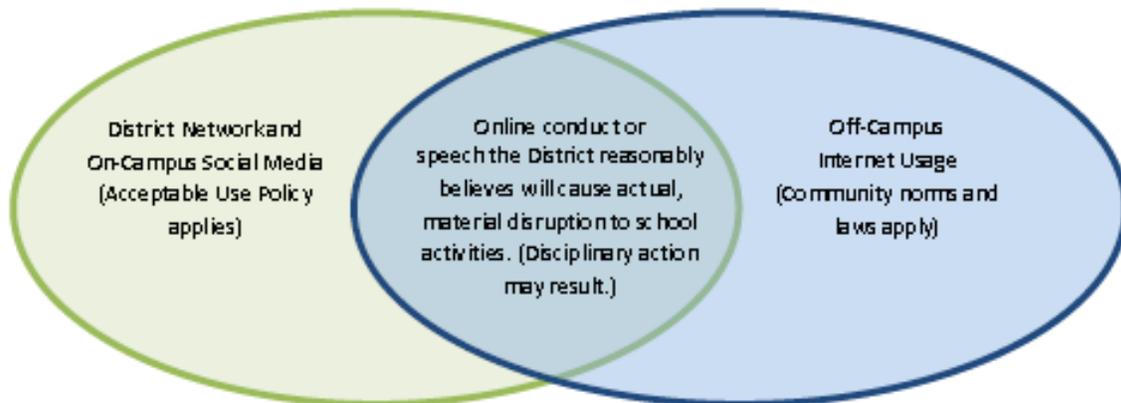
C. Social Media and Internet Use Guidelines

Although students enjoy free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the US Constitution, those rights are subject to certain limitations. Access to District technology is a privilege, not a right. The guidelines in this document are intended to present students and families with direction for responsible, safe, ethical and effective use of social media.

Student use of District technology for electronic communication is governed by the District Acceptable Use Policy, which describes consequences for violations. Students should not expect privacy in the content of their personal files on the District Internet system or other District technology, including email. District technology may be used for educational purposes only. Use for entertainment purposes such as personal blogging, instant messaging, on-line shopping or gaming is not allowed.

Use of personal technology may violate the District's Acceptable Use Policy if school or District authorities reasonably believe the conduct or speech has caused or will cause actual, material disruption of school activities or a staff member's ability to perform his or her job duties.

Although off-campus Internet use is generally unrelated to school, in some circumstances courts have held that the off-campus electronic communications may be connected enough to school or District interests to result in either student or staff-member discipline. The figure below illustrates the potential overlap in the use of District and personal technology.



D. Student Use of Technology

Control of Personal Information

- A. While using District technology, students shall not disclose their personal contact information or the personal contact information of others that would allow a recipient to locate the student, including his/her family name, home address or location, school address or location, work address or phone number.
- B. Students are advised to follow the rules described in section A in their use of personal technology as well.

Electronic Equipment

If you are in possession of non-district issued electronic items at school, they may only be used before the morning bell rings and after school, unless your school has adopted a policy further allowing or restricting the use of personally owned electronic devices. In all other instances, they are to be kept turned off and out of sight on school grounds unless an administrator or designee gives permission to use the device. Teachers may also allow students to utilize their personal electronic devices for the completion of specific assignments, as a component of their coursework. These electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- tape player/recorder, CD player, radio, iPod, or MP3 player or any similar device
- camera
- cellular phone (including the camera that may be part of the phone)
- recorder
- television
- games
- computer or tablet
- Smartwatches or other smart devices

If this rule is violated, an administrator may ask you to surrender the device and will hold it until you or your parent comes to retrieve it. Refusal to surrender the device will be considered defiance and will result in appropriate administrative action. If the item is not picked up by July 1st following the end of the school year, the item will be deemed abandoned. Each school will determine what to do with abandoned items. Neither the school nor school staff members are responsible for any such items if they are lost, stolen, broken or damaged.

A student may not electronically record a teacher or a class without the teacher's written permission. Additionally, students may not record or post to the internet recordings of fighting, acts of bullying, assault, or battery, whether staged or real.

During any district, state, or federally required assessment administration, if you are found with an electronic device that reproduces, transmits, calculates, or records (e.g., a cell phone, camera, or calculator) in your pocket, at your desk, or within your reach during testing, your test will be invalidated. Additionally, the device will be confiscated and you will be disciplined.

If school officials have reasonable suspicion that electronic items contain evidence of a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, or criminal activity, they may conduct a search of the contents of the electronic item.

TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET SAFETY POLICY

Technology is an integral part of your educational experience and must be used in a way that is consistent with the goals of the School District of Manatee County (SDMC). Technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, personal digital assistants, other electronic devices, software, email, the internet, and other network resources. Your use of technology is a privilege and you are responsible for using it appropriately. This includes use of district technology while off school property.

The following are improper uses of technology:

- a. Photographing, recording, or using images of any person without their knowledge or consent.
- b. Accessing pornographic or obscene images, language or materials, including screen savers.
- c. Transmitting any material in violation of federal, state, local law, School Board policy, regulation, or the District Code of Student Conduct. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material; threatening, obscene or pornographic material; test questions or answers; student work products; trade secrets; and computer viruses, "worms," or "Trojans."
- d. Using technology for commercial activities unless explicitly permitted by the School Board.
- e. Modifying the original SDMC pre-set software image including, but not limited to: loading software applications not authorized by SDMC; changing the computer name; changing or removing operating system extensions; altering security/filtering software; altering the pre-loaded operating system or application; or taking apart the computer for access to internal parts.
- f. Downloading music, games, or videos at any time on a district computer.
- g. Using cellular phones or other wireless communication devices during unauthorized times of the school day. Cellular phones, tablets, and other electronic devices may only be used on campus before or after school, unless your school has different policy restrictions or you have permission from an administrator or designee.
- h. Using email, instant messaging, texting, web pages or other technology operations to threaten, disrupt, or interfere with the safety and welfare of the school community, including engaging in cyber-bullying, harassment, or "sexting."
- i. Gaining or attempting to gain unauthorized access to SDMC networks, computer servers, or data files.
- j. Gaining or attempting to gain unauthorized access to non-SDMC networks, computer servers, or data files utilizing SDMC equipment.
- k. Using profanity, obscenity, or other language which may be offensive to another person, or reposting personal communications without the author's prior consent, when using computer network access.
- l. Downloading or printing any material that is deemed inappropriate by the School District.
- m. Attempting to log on to the SDMC network or other district-affiliated systems using another's identity or password.
- n. Sharing of logins and passwords to the SDMC network.
- o. Bypassing or attempting to bypass SDMC filtering software.
- p. Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding students, unauthorized online access by students, including hacking and other unlawful activities and access by students to inappropriate matter on the Internet is prohibited.

Violations will result in serious disciplinary actions and may include arrest and prosecution if a criminal law is broken. Examples of such criminal violations would be computer hacking or trespass, harassment or threats via computer, or computer fraud.

System Security – Students are responsible for their individual District account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from using their account. Under no circumstances should a student provide his or her password to another person. Students shall immediately notify a teacher or administrator if they identify a security problem.

Resource Limits – Students shall not download large files without permission of a teacher or administrator. Students shall not misuse District or school distribution lists or discussion groups by sending irrelevant messages.

Because online content can be spread in mere seconds to a mass audience, the District encourages students to ask themselves before posting any information online whether they would be comfortable having the information printed in a newspaper alongside their photo.

**If you would not bring it to a college admissions or job interview,
do not post it online!**

DISCLAIMER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY

Although the school attempts to maintain a safe and secure environment, theft and loss do sometimes occur. All personal property in possession of the student should be identified with the student's name. The school disclaims responsibility for any lost, stolen, broken or confiscated property. Parents send and students bring such items to school at their own risk. Students are expected to turn in to the office any found items.

References

This document was developed by the School District of Manatee County's Communications Department in collaboration with the Sarasota County Schools Information Technology Department and the Office of the Superintendent.

The guidelines were adapted from the Sarasota County Schools Social Media Guidelines, School District of Manatee County's Policies and Procedures, the School District of Manatee County's Code of Student Conduct, Student Social Media Guidelines of the San Diego Unified School District, which developed them in consultation with a consortium of legal, educational and social media experts.

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