tweet
friend
like
post
photo
chat
SHARE
#StayConnectedResponsibly

Social Media Guidelines
for students

Communications Department
Updated 3/3/16

DeKalb County
School District

March 9, 2016

Dear DeKalb Schools Community,

In the 21st Century, students use technology more than ever before. They grow up with mobile devices at their fingertips, and the Internet has become a social playground. Because social media is instant, easy, and a common way of sharing information today, it is imperative that we practice safe social networking.

The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) is providing guidelines for students and employees on the use of social media inside and outside of the classroom.

While the DeKalb County Board of Education provides an official Internet Acceptable Use Policy, found at the eBoard website on Dekalb.k12.ga.us, our guidelines offer a quick reference for safe, online etiquette. See our guidelines online at http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/communications.

Engagement, collaboration, learning, and sharing in digital environments are here to stay. Because technology changes rapidly, our community must work together to educate students on how to engage on social media platforms responsibly. In addition to these guidelines, DeKalb County School District will provide activities and resources that support social media, another important method of communication to keep our community in the know.

Let's *Stay Connected* responsibly.

Sincerely,

Dr. R. Stephen Green
Superintendent
DeKalb County School District

Social Media Guidelines

Introduction

❖ The DeKalb County School District works hard to provide students with access to an education that prepares them to succeed in a global society utilizing 21st century technology. Therefore, it is important to remember that social media and digital communication are key components to our everyday lives that must be understood and used responsibly.

❖ This document, the Student Social Media Guidelines, including the DeKalb County School District Social Media Policy, provides information about how to responsibly use social media while in school and at home by:

  ▪ Providing recommendations for appropriate social media communication;

  ▪ Sharing ideas about how to create a healthy digital image; and

  ▪ Outlining procedures for how to protect yourself while using social media.

❖ This document should be reviewed in accordance with the DCSD's Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy. Click here to review: https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/ePolicy/Policy

Social Media – *Defined*

❖ Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Social media at DeKalb County School District (DCSD) is important because social media tools offer exceptional transparency, support effective communication by helping to expand reach, foster engagement, and increase access to credible information externally and internally.

❖ Some examples of Social Media uses include:

- Blogging about music, sports, or news events

- Posting updates on your Facebook or Twitter page

- Participating in a teacher-established Edmodo group; or

- Using YouTube to work on a class project

Establish a Digital Image That Represents the Best You

❖ **Let your online image reflect who you are.**

Your digital footprint or reputation is left online when you post on blogs, upload videos and pictures or even leaving comments on websites. No matter what your online actions are, consider that what you share can leave a permanent record even if you click delete. Therefore, be extra careful about what you share online and with who you share content.

Did you know that many employers and colleges do a social media search when making a hiring or admissions decision? In the digital world, what you post online can *define* who you are. A *simple* post can get you closer to graduation *or* land you a great position

at a company of your choice. Here are some examples of how you can use social media to your advantage:

- Starting a blog about top news stories

- Giving knowledgeable feedback on articles

- Publishing an online resume and professional portfolio

❖ **Being Accountable**

Through an internet IP address your identity can *always* be determined. This is why being responsible for the content you post is important in all social media environments whether at home or at school. Post only accurate information and be accountable for what you say.

❖ **Families as Social Media Partners**

Your parents are responsible for what you do online when you are a minor. Be open to your parent's suggestions about what information should remain private and what information can be shared publicly even when your parents are not as social media savvy. A great way to protect yourself online is to share your passwords and social media accounts with your parents and/or with family members you trust.

Post Responsibly-Consider your Audience

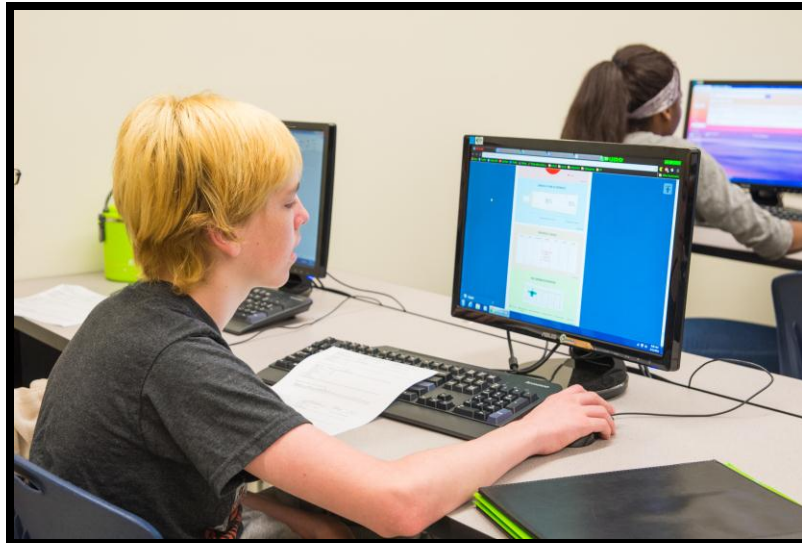❖ *Social media used academically can be considered an extension of your classroom*

Sometimes social media will be used for a class assignment and the same classroom rules will apply online as they do at school. For example, if you would not make fun of a classmate at school, you shouldn't do it online. Unless your teacher gives you permission, do not expose content to audiences for whom it was not intended.

❖ *Be your best at all times*

The digital world can give the impression of anonymity, but do not be deceived; it is the same as face to face communication. Sometimes people believe that you are not accountable for what is shared online, but you are always responsible for what you say online or face to face. Be your best at all times and assume that someone is always observing and monitoring your online actions.

❖ ***Think before you post***

Often times it is too late to retract what has been read by others. Keep in mind that posting while emotional is not advisable. Take a moment to calm down, step away from the device you are using and think before you post. Remember online posts can never be completely deleted whether you have regrets or not. Always ask yourself *"is this a post I want to live with*."

Every Action has a Consequence Online

❖ ***Online Protection***

Protect yourself online at all times. One of the ways you can protect yourself is by keeping your passwords private. It is not a good idea to share passwords with friends no matter how close you are. For example, if you share your password with a friend on a piece of paper, there's no guarantee that the piece of paper won't get lost or be visible to someone else. You should also make sure that the computers you're using or websites you're visiting do not automatically save passwords. Additionally, only accept friend requests from people you know and if there is a post you're uncomfortable with, unfriend or report the post if necessary. You may interact online with people who you have never met in person, but you should always use caution. Identifying personal details such as where you live, a social security number, or where you're staying on vacation, can be too revealing and compromise your identity. Posting vacation pics, for example, might make more sense to post after you've arrived back home.

❖ *Social Media and Personal Use*

There are different uses for social media. Sometimes social media is personal and sometimes social media is used for school-related instruction. When social media becomes a disruption, even when a post is made during personal time, the school may need to get involved and disciplinary action can be taken such as a parent conference or suspension. In fact, there is no right to privacy when using school-related social media. The school may review what you post at any time. To avoid infractions like this from taking place, review the Student Code of Conduct which prohibits poor behavior and inappropriate digital communications as well. See here for the Student Code of Conduct http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/student-relations/code-of-student-conduct.

❖ *Adjust privacy settings as needed*

There are different privacy setting defaults depending on the social media platform you use. Some platforms might change those settings over time without making it obvious. So, it's always important to follow changes being made by social media providers. In addition, you can limit access of who can see your posts. You might decide to have some of your posts private such as posting about class grades or college choices, or public posts such as cancelled games due to rain. Keep in mind that privacy settings are automatically set by social media providers governing who can see your posts.

Take Cyberbullying Seriously

❖ *Drawing The Line*

Cyberbullying happens when kids bully each other through electronic technology. There can be a fine line when it comes to cyberbullying. What you consider to be harmless teasing, can be hurtful to others. Cyberbullying includes:

- *Intimidating or threatening persons*
- *Threats against the school or person's property*
- *Using another person's log-in or password to send inappropriate messages and images*
- *Creating fake profiles of other persons*
- *Creating websites to embarrass, threaten, or socially isolate another person*
- *Circulating offensive photos or videos*
- *Texting offensive messages*
- *Creating rumors and posting false information about people*

To get more information on cyberbullying and drawing the line between digital use and digital abuse, go here *http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/bullying-awareness/index/additional-resources* , *http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/bullying/teasing.pdf* , and *http://cyberbullying.us/* , *http://cyberbullying.us/resources/teens/* .

❖ *Reporting Cyberbullying*

If you believe that you or someone you know is being cyberbullied, report the behavior by telling a parent/guardian, school staff member, or trusted adult. In the event you suspect immediate danger, call 911. Do not respond or retaliate, and plan ahead so that you do not violate any rules that can be subject to discipline. Here are some more internet safety strategies for DCSD students http://cyberbullying.us/report/ , http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/bullying/internet-safety-strategies-for-students.pdf and http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/bullying/cyberbullying.

❖ *Have a Plan*

In the event you experience cyberbullying, it's a good idea to have a plan in place. Never respond to offensive online behavior and save any messages that could be used as evidence when you report the behavior.   For more information on reporting cyberbullying, go here http://cyberbullying.us/resources/teens/ .

Adhere to the Guidelines

❖ *Review the Policy*

While these guidelines are to help students establish a social media presence online that is healthy, it is important to review the Website and Online Social Media Publishing Guidelines (Policy IFBGB) https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/ePolicyIFBGB

Please Note: this document are general recommendations only and do not cover every potential social media situation. Also, see Staff Social Media Policy.

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