

Use of Social Media

AUHSD Guidelines for the use of Social Media

Social media sites offer the potential to establish communication between persons and organizations that would normally be inaccessible otherwise. Social media sites can be venues to share knowledge, express creativity and establish working relationships with individuals in various fields. Social media sites have grown in use by parents, educators, and students, and are a useful tool in learning environment if properly utilized. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities.

While the use of social media sites has become commonplace, it is important that you remember to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner to avoid any unintended situations that may adversely affect your professional standing with the District. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your social media conduct that adversely affects you or your fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects AUHSD may result in disciplinary action.

These guidelines, along with BP/AR/E 4040 - Employee Use of Technology, will support you with your use of social networking sites in a way that protects your reputation (private and professional), follows state laws and District policies, and abides by the code of conduct for teachers set forth by the California Commission for Teacher Credentialing.

1 View all content posted to the Internet as forever

Think twice about what you post because privacy does not exist on the Internet. Once you post information, pictures, or content to the Internet, it becomes a public document and as such can be captured, copied, archived or retained by millions of users. Such comments, pictures, or paintings can be used out of context and without your permission.

2 What you do personally on the Internet affects you

Anytime you post online, you are at risk of affecting your professional career whether you intend to or not. If you would not say something in the presence of someone else (for example a parent, another teacher, administrator, or community member), consider whether to post it online and do not expect any greater privacy online.

3 Never pretend to be someone else on the Internet

Because the Internet can give users a false sense of anonymity, some users will write things that they would not say in person. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to the author. Whenever you post to the Internet, you need to follow the same professional standards you would in real life.

4 What you personally post does not shield you from violations of policy or law

If you post inappropriate, unethical, or illegal content, you will be responsible for the repercussions from such posts or content. You are responsible for ensuring any photos posted adhere to privacy laws. Posting of information considered proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or absence (as defined by CIPA and NCIPA) is in violation of district, state and federal laws.

5 Communication with current students using personal social media sites

It could be viewed as inappropriate for District employees to communicate with current students enrolled in the District on any personal social networking site. This includes becoming “friends” or allowing students to access your personal page to communicate. Employees should refrain from creating personal social media sites that encourage social interaction with current students enrolled in the District.

6 Personal access of social media sites during the workday

During the workday, employees should refrain from participating in any social networking Web site for personal reasons

7 The use of personal email addresses

Employees should only provide their official District email address as a way to communicate with students or parents regarding District and/or school related business.

8 Texting

Electronic communications with students should be through district email and/or district sponsored platforms. Texting should only be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to school business

9 Be Respectful

Understand that social media sites can encourage opposing viewpoints and discussion. Respond in a way that reflects well on the reputation and image of the District. All online communication should be considered a matter of public record and should be made with careful consideration of word choice, tone, grammar, and subject matter that models high professional standards.

10 Creating social media sites

When Creating a social media site, for district/school use, prior authorization from administration must be obtained. Always identify yourself as a representative of the Acalanes Union High School District. Misrepresentation or false information could lead to disciplinary action. Employees should notify parents of their intention to use this media to communicate with the student and the intended purpose of such communications. All ethical expectations for appropriate employee/student relationships should be followed.

11 Using Social Media in the Classroom

Understand the legal compliance to protect student information when asking students to utilize social media sites for assignments. Allow students to opt-out and provide parent/opt-out forms. Teach students how to act when working online with others and explain to students how the class will be using social media. Facilitate a discussion about how to stay safe online. Make sure students understand appropriate ways to react to cyberbullying and know who to contact if they experience cyberbullying while using social media for class assignments.