Social Media Tips for Counselors
The Dos and The Don’ts

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Do: Post in a variety of places and embed!

- **Instagram**: Visual posts, reaches students, staff, kids.
- **Facebook**: Moderated posts, reaches parents, staff.
- **Twitter**: Quick updates in the moment, reaches staff, some parents, some students.
- Most schools already have a large social media following. Leverage school accounts.
Do: Follow district policies, guidelines

- Review board policies regarding communication, student records and privacy.
- Review district social media guidelines.
- Review technology acceptable use policies.

See Mehlville School District's Guidelines
See Affton School District's Guidelines

Do: Post relevant info and celebrations

- Post about important dates and events, social-emotional learning, supports for families, student celebrations, etc.
- Be a source of kindness and support.
- Be current.
- Use an easily recognizable profile image (your logo or school photo is perfect).
- Use school hashtags.
Do: Repeat yourself

- I prefer the term amplification.
- The same post is OK for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Include photos and videos for greater reach.
- Do tag others to encourage discussion and shares.

Don’t: Violate student privacy!

- Don’t violate FERPA. Use the least amount of general directory information about a student to tell a story. Don’t use a student’s full name on social media unless they’ve received an award or are being featured in a communications department piece.
  - Do: Scan the backgrounds of photos and zoom to ensure they don’t contain student information.
  - Do: Check media exclusion lists.
  - Do: Be careful posting about students with IEPs, discipline issues, etc.
Do: Put your phone away when angry

- Don’t post while angry.
- Don’t post reprimands.
- Don’t post without proofreading.

Facebook-specific guidelines for new pages

- Don’t give ownership or admin rights to anyone who is outside your organization.
- Do give your building principal admin rights. Schools should give the communications department admin rights for school pages.
- Do review page roles at least once a year and remove those who are no longer relevant.
- Do include guidelines for fans and visitors in your company overview section.
Comments: To reply or not to reply

- Answer questions. Either provide a factual response, or let the person who commented know where they can get more information.
- Sometimes a page follower will disagree with your post or state an opinion you may not agree with. Let these comments stand and avoid replying to them.
- Hide comments that are completely off topic or from bots.
- Delete comments that contain inappropriate language, spam, personal attacks, staff or student-specific complaints or that are unlawful or an invasion of student or staff privacy.

Personal Social Media Accounts

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. Even when you have a disclaimer or use a different user name in your social media accounts, you will still be considered a district employee by those who know you.
Don’ts: Personal social media accounts

- Don’t share student information.
- Don’t friend students or engage in private messaging with students.
- Don’t harass, cyberbully or cyberstalk anyone.
- Don’t use personal social media during work time or on district computers.
- Don’t disrespect coworkers online.

Dos: Personal social media accounts

- Do keep in mind: Nothing is private online. Screenshots live forever.
- Do: Be conscious of what you like. Likes are public.
- Do: Be positive online. Be a role model for taking concerns to someone who can resolve them.
Social Media Action Plan and Resources

- Check with your communications department or leadership to see if you can embed your posts on school Facebook pages and contribute to school Twitter and Instagram accounts.
- Learn your school hashtags.
- Decide what your messages should be.
- Consider adding graphics (Canva is great!) or, if you’re fancy, video (WeVideo).
- Follow other schools and counselors to see what they are posting!
- Enjoy being a helpful, positive voice for kids!