



***DIGITAL/SOCIAL MEDIA
EMPLOYEE
BEST PRACTICES***





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PURPOSE OF DIGITAL/SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION

Emerging platforms for online and digital collaboration are fundamentally changing the way we communicate with educators, support students, and serve communities. The Poway Unified School District recognizes the importance of using electronic resources/media as a tool to connect and share information with our stakeholders. With proper precautions, PUSD supports the use of digital and social media as a valuable tool to further its vision and mission of college and career readiness for all students. This Digital/Social Media manual will provide best practices for employees and assist managers and staff of PUSD who create, administer, or post using District and school digital media or social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or Instagram on behalf of the organization.

News, websites, and television continue to be the primary sources of information, with digital/social media seeing rapid growth. Staying current and engaging families and the community with a strong online presence is increasingly important. Pairing websites with communication channels like phone calls, emails, texts, and social media will ensure a message maintains consistency and allows us to engage with people where they are gathering their information.

An official PUSD social media platform is a site authorized by the Poway Unified School District's Superintendent of Schools, Chief Communications Officer, or Principal. Sites that have not been authorized by the Superintendent or designee, but contain content related to the organization or comments on educational operations, such as a site created by school-related organizations (PTA, Boosters, Clubs, Foundations), or a parent, student or employee's personal site, are not considered official PUSD social media platforms.

The purpose of using digital/social media is to share news and information about programs, events, and resources within the educational context. This document contains PUSD's best practices regarding the use of digital/social media. These guidelines will continue to evolve as new digital/social media tools and platforms are introduced.



SUGGESTED DIGITAL/SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYEES

The following is a list of suggested practices for all employees of the Poway Unified School District, for both personal and professional digital communication/social media use.

1. Employees are responsible for the information they post and share, and for their online responses.
2. Employees are encouraged to be aware of privacy settings to control access to personal networks, webpages, profiles, posts, digital media, forums, fan pages, etc.
3. Employees should only contact currently enrolled students for purposes related to education or school activities.
4. Employees should ensure that online interactions are appropriate with current students, and alumni under the age of 18 on social networking and messaging app sites.
5. Employees shall not use any electronic listening or recording device in any classroom of elementary and secondary schools without the prior consent of the teacher and principal, per Education Code 51512.
6. Employees who identify themselves publicly on social media as a PUSD employee should strive to maintain a personal profile that is consistent with how they wish to represent themselves to colleagues, parents/legal guardians, and students.
7. Employees should never post threatening, harassing, racist, or bullying comments toward or against a PUSD individual via electronic communication or on any social media site.
8. Employees shall not share confidential District or student information acquired or learned in the course of their employment as a PUSD employee at any time.
9. Use of any PUSD or program-related logos or images as a profile on one's personal social networking sites is prohibited unless approved in advance. This may be viewed as copyright infringement or impersonation, which violates site-specific community standards and the profile will be reported.
10. Employees should be aware that all of their online activity is public, and should be mindful that what is published online will potentially be archived for years to come.



USING OFFICIAL DISTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA

An official District or school social media platform is a site authorized by the Poway Unified School District's Superintendent of Schools, Director of Communications, or Principal. Sites that have not been authorized by the Superintendent or designee, but contain content related to the organization or comments on educational operations, such as a site created by school-related organizations (PTA, Boosters, Clubs, Foundations), or a parent, student or employee's personal site, are not considered official PUSD social media platforms.

Official social media posts directly reflect on the Poway Unified School District and should therefore be written and structured in an appropriate, ethical, professional, and lawful manner. An employee's use of official social media should be seen as an extension of one's workplace, and employees should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with how they are expected to behave around staff, students, and parents. Use of PUSD official social media sites and approved programs indicates that you have read and will abide by the responsibility guidelines. PUSD reserves the right to **moderate and remove any comments and posts** that do not fall within its official guidelines on official PUSD platforms.

Although online conversations and media posts on social media sites are often casual, they must remain professional and respectful. Comments on official District social media pages may be monitored to ensure compliance with PUSD social networking guidelines. Those posts not in compliance with PUSD guidelines will be removed.

1. Employees are welcomed and encouraged to engage with PUSD social media sites (e.g., comments, photo tagging, retweets). Employees are encouraged to engage with and cross promote PUSD related sites and should use the same social media best practices and procedures that govern social media usage.
2. The Communications Department reserves the right to remove or request employees to remove content or comments that violate the "**Content Deletion Guidelines**" listed below:
 - Are defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, intimidating, hateful, libelous, obscene or may be considered hostile
 - Contains unauthorized commercial solicitations or spam
 - Is clearly off topic and/or presents misinformation
 - Advocates illegal activity
 - Infringes on copyrights or trademarks
 - Obscenities/obscene materials
 - Comments/materials pertaining to violence
 - Comments that are not respectful
 - Commenters who misrepresent themselves
 - A single person who is dominating the conversation

- An advertisement for a commercial business or political endorsement
 - Information that violates student privacy
 - Information that violates staff privacy
3. Before including a link to a third party website on the District website or social media, employees should verify that any terms and conditions of that website permit a link to it. All links must specify that they are a third party's website. Employees must read and comply with the terms of use of any digital/social media platform they use. No links are permitted to chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes, or gossip.
 4. Logos or images produced to represent or replace the PUSD District logo may not be posted to a social media site without specific approval from the Communications Department.



SCHOOL & DISTRICT DIGITAL/SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES AND CONSIDERATIONS

When using sites that have not been authorized by the Superintendent or designee, but contain content related to the organization or comments on educational operations, such as a site created by school-related organizations (PTA, Boosters, Clubs, Foundations), the following practices are recommended:

1. Consider a few basic objectives before communicating digitally or creating a social media post:
 - What does the group/organization plan to achieve with this social media post or message?
 - What kind of information does the group/organization want to share or receive?
 - Who (what audience) will engage, read, and comment?
 - Is this the appropriate venue for communicating the message?
2. Personal information should not be posted on websites/social media sites, including but not limited to: Student Identification Numbers, Employee Identification Numbers, Social Security Numbers, Personal Addresses, Phone Numbers, or Driver's License Numbers.
3. Social media sites are not private, and the expectation of privacy is not conveyed to the user or administrator of the site. Often there are questions, feedback and comments directed to the administrator individually. Do not engage in an online argument; instead, reply politely that they can contact the school with their concerns.
4. Photos/Videos posted on digital/social media pages should accurately portray the Poway Unified School District and the persons depicted in the photos/videos. The following guidelines should be followed when posting photos/videos:
 - Photos/Videos should not violate the "Content Deletion Guidelines" (see above).
 - Photos/Videos of children should not be posted without consent from their parents/legal guardians. Always use great caution when posting photos/videos of young children.
 - Photos/Videos of public events can be posted on social media sites, but they should be appropriate and reflect the organization in a positive light. The posts should contain content that may be posted on PUSD's approved social media and websites in accordance with PUSD guidelines. Basic rules of social media etiquette and appropriate policy standards will be observed.
 - Be aware that some photos/videos may have copyright restrictions.
5. Consider the image being portrayed about PUSD. Be mindful that what is posted may be viewed by parents/legal guardians, students, administrators, and community members. As we all know, in this digital age, *posts stay public for a long, long time.*
 - Ensure that accurate information is provided.
 - Use best judgment, and if in doubt, do not post.
 - Don't be afraid to seek advice by contacting the Communications Department for guidance.



PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Employees should be aware that they are personally responsible for anything they may write or present online.

SCHOOL & DISTRICT PRESS INQUIRIES

Postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you about a digital/social media posting or requests additional information, please contact the Communications Department. They will provide you with further information and guidance.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Respect the privacy of students, management, and staff and the opinions of others. Before sharing a comment, post, picture, or video, obtain their permission first.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

For more information, or to request a post using PUSD social media platforms (Twitter, Vimeo, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram: @PowayUnified), please contact Christine Paik, Chief Communications Officer at (858) 521-2707 or cpaik@powayusd.com.

The guidelines and practices outlined in this document are intended as suggestions and recommendations for employees and are not meant to replace or supersede any PUSD board policies or administrative regulations, collectively bargained agreements, Ed Code, or State/Federal laws.