



**SUNNYSIDE**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
*Learning Today for a Brighter Tomorrow*

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

The Sunnyside School District recognizes that many of our staff, students, parents, and community members are active social media users. Actively participating in these digital environments is an integral part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

These guidelines are intended to provide protection for both the employee's reputation and that of the Sunnyside School District. These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology (Link to Internet Use Agreement) including computers, email, and the Internet that are currently in place in the Sunnyside School District.

By accessing, creating or contributing to sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, blogs, wikis, podcasts, or any other form of online activity, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read through the entire document carefully before engaging in any social media activities.

## 1) Employees With “District or School” Related Online Accounts

A “District or School” account refers to social media pages that pertain to Sunnyside School District schools, classes, programs, clubs and sports. These do not refer to employees personal social media pages.

- Register your “District or School” account with the Communications Department.
  - Your account will be added to the SSD’s Social Media Directory and included in the District’s social media archiving system, ArchiveSocial.
- “District or School” social media accounts and the subsequent posts, comments, and direct messages are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and Washington State Public Records laws. (List RCW links).
  - It is the responsibility of the employee who operates the social media account to work with the District’s Public Records Officer should a request be made.
- Posts made to “District or School” social media accounts should always meet the highest standards in professional discretion.
  - **Appropriate content for “District or School” accounts includes:**
    - Posts directly related to the activities of the Sunnyside School District.
    - Posts directly related to the featured school, department, class, activity, sport or program.
    - Shared posts from other “District or School” accounts included in the SSD Social Media Directory (Link).
  - **Inappropriate content for “District or School” accounts includes:**
    - Provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, content showing or promoting gang activity, the consumption of alcohol, use of drugs, or any activity students are legally prohibited from doing.
    - Posts claiming to represent or “speak for” the Sunnyside School District.
    - Posts for personal gain or personal businesses,
    - For-Profit Advertisements

## 2) Employees Engaging In Online Activity in a Personal Capacity

While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to comment upon the workplace on your personal pages, it remains good practice to refrain from posting things that could be embarrassing or call someone's professional reputation into question.

- Before posting or sharing content, ask yourself if you would want this attributed to you on the front page of the newspaper, or read to your students or parents. If the answer is "no," then it is probably best not to share.
- All photos and personal information should be posted under the assumption that it could end up in the public domain, no matter your privacy settings.
- Ensure your online behavior is the honest, respectable, and considerate behavior you demonstrate offline.
- Ensure that posts could not be construed as speaking for the Sunnyside School District.
- Protect your privacy and respect the privacy of students and colleagues.
- Do not use your District email account for personal social media sites.
- Refrain from derogatory statements about colleagues or students, or other comments that would reflect badly on your professional reputation. The Sunnyside School District respects the rights of its employees to exercise their rights, but asks that you thoughtfully consider your rights and responsibilities before posting.

Please review the **Employee-Student Relations** section on Page 4.

## Employee-Student Relations

The district recognizes the roles that communication and collaboration between employees and students play in the educational process and experience. The District further recognizes that the advancements in electronic communication and social media technologies create greater opportunity for interactions between employees and students. These additional guidelines are for both employee and student protection.

### *Student Privacy*

- Do not to violate any provision of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#), which includes confidential student or personnel information.
- Be aware of students who have “opted-out” of District communications before posting photos and names online.

*Student – Employee Boundaries:* Please review **Sunnyside School District Policy 5253 Maintaining Professional Staff-Student Boundaries.**

Employees are never under any obligation to:

- Accept friend or follower requests from any student on their personal accounts,
- Use personal social media accounts to engage with students,
- Participate in District projects with their personal accounts.

In addition, unless a personally managed account has privacy settings correctly configured, everything posted may be publically accessible to students whether connected to them or not.

Communication with students through technology should:

- Be for educational purposes,
- Not violate the law, district policy, or other recognized professional standards.
- Must not violate any provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- Be transparent, accessible as a matter of public record, and professional in nature.

Exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media channel. Even if the communication takes place from a personal account, **all communication related to the educational process is considered a public record.** Use discretion and carefully consider the policies of the District before accepting any permission-based friend or follower requests received from students. It is the District’s recommendation that if you choose to accept friend or follower requests, you should accept all to avoid a perceived preference for certain individuals.