

Using social media: Healthy guidelines for Goshen employees

Social media is an exciting and powerful communication and educational tool – as long as it is used effectively. Teachers and staff are encouraged to use social media as a way to connect with others, share resources, and enhance the classroom experience.

While social media can be fun and valuable, it is important for Goshen Central School District employees to understand what it means to be a good digital citizen

and to follow best practices when engaging in social media or any online activity.

The following guidelines provide direction to district employees when participating in social media activities. This includes using social media as a way to enhance classroom instruction or to communicate as a representative of a district club or activity – as well as for personal use outside of school.

What is social media?

Social media refers to online tools and services that allow any Internet user to create and publish content. Many of these sites use personal profiles where users post information about themselves or the group represented. The “social” in social media comes in as these individuals or groups find others with similar interests, or within our district’s community, and interact with them through online platforms, sharing information and knowledge, offering support and networking.

Social media allows for easy sharing and re-purposing of existing content, expanding the reach of your work and enabling others to share it with their friends and networks.

Popular social media services include:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Blogs
- YouTube

Want to use social media to represent a district club or activity? Let us know!

Any teacher/staff member who would like to use social media (or is already using social media) to communicate as a representative of a school-authorized activity, club or athletic team is asked to e-mail Public Information Specialist Christina Gore at christina.gore@gcsny.org with the following information:

1. What club/activity/sport will you represent?
2. What social media outlet will you use (Twitter, Facebook)?
3. What will your username will be?

Note: All district social media accounts are subject to approval by the superintendent of schools and are informally monitored to ensure safety and effectiveness.

Online behavior and activity, inside and outside school, should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and professionalism that all Goshen employees are expected to use in their personal and professional lives.



Tip: Be active! A successful social media presence requires diligence. Your site is only as interesting as your last post – make time to check in and post fresh content at least a few times each week.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA: KEYS TO SUCCESS

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Anyone using social media in any way – whether for instruction, as a club or activity representative, or for personal use outside of school – should follow these general rules:

- Be yourself
- Be knowledgeable and honest
- Be responsible
- Be effective
- Be active
- Be a good listener
- Be respectful and maintain a good reputation
- Be thoughtful and deliberate (pause and think before posting!)

Questions?

For information about using social media for a district club, sport, or activity, contact Public Information Specialist Christina Gore at christina.gore@gcsny.org. For information about using social media for instruction, contact K-12 Technology Coordinator Jonathan Redeker at jonathan.redeker@gcsny.org.

Guidelines for district employees using social media for district purposes

Are you a club advisor or team coach who wants to use social media to communicate to students and parents? Do you want to use social media to enhance your classroom instruction? These guidelines are for you!

Best practices

- Be professional. Employees who use social media for classroom/school purposes and therefore identify themselves as a Goshen employee should ensure that their profile and related content reflect how they wish to present themselves to colleagues, parents, students and community members.
- Be responsible. Be careful about the content of your posts, who you follow, and what you re-tweet, favorite, like, share, etc. Be mindful of your comments made to other social media sites. Your followers will see these activities, which can be viewed as endorsements.
- Be respectful. Mind the privacy and feelings of school community members. Refrain from reporting, speculating, discussing or giving opinions on Goshen Central School District topics that could be considered sensitive, confidential or disparaging.
- Be relevant. Post about things that directly relate to your classroom, school, club, team, department, district, etc. Do not promote outside organizations.

General guidelines

- Before posting photos, videos or names of students, check to make sure that the student is not on the district's do-not-publicize list. If a student is on the list, you may NOT publicize that student in any way on your social media site. E-mail christina.gore@gcsny.org for clarification.
- Choose a profile name that clearly and concisely identifies your program and its district affiliation (if applicable).
- Do not use Goshen Central School District logos as your profile picture.
- If you plan on communicating with students via social media, notify parents ahead of time.
- Confidential information about students and/or colleagues should never be posted (phone numbers, addresses, etc.)
- Respect brand, trademark and copyright information and images.

Guidelines for district employees using social media for personal purposes

Are you using social media to communicate with family and friends? With social media, the line between public and private – personal and professional – can often get blurred, and it is no secret that school district employees are often held to higher standards than other public employees.

For this reason, all Goshen employees who use social media outside of school are asked to consider the following:

- Goshen employees – whether they have identified themselves as such or not – maintain an association and responsibility to the district. How you represent yourself online should be consistent with how you represent yourself in person to colleagues, students and parents.
- Confidential information about students and/or colleagues should never be posted (phone numbers, addresses, etc.)
- Employees should respect the privacy and feelings of school community members. Refrain from reporting, speculating, discussing or giving opinions on Goshen Central School District topics that could be considered sensitive, confidential or disparaging.
- Photos or videos of students should never be posted online without parental consent.
- Employees should always be careful about sharing personal information online. Be thoughtful about your posts, photos, videos, comments, etc.

Tip: Be a good listener!

Social media provides an opportunity for others to talk to you, ask questions and share feedback. Be responsive – provide answers to questions and thank them for their comments. Always do as much listening and responding as you do “talking.”

If you don't get it right...

Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, make it clear what you've done to fix it, and apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.

If it's a major mistake (e.g., reporting confidential information), please let someone know immediately so the school can take the proper steps. E-mail christina.gore@gcsny.org with questions.

When using district computers, employees are expected to follow the regulations set forth by the Goshen Central School District Acceptable Use Policy for District Computer Systems. It is available for review at www.goshenschoolsny.org.