



## **Canyons School District's Social Media Guidelines**

More and more, teachers, administrators, schools, and departments are turning to social media to connect with their colleagues and the community. Canyons District encourages the appropriate use of social media by employees. However, these communication, storytelling and brand-building tools come with a variety of pitfalls to keep in mind.

These guidelines are for employees who use social media personally, professionally, or as part of the performance of their duties as a Canyons employee. They align with the following Canyons Board of Education policies:

- POLICY—400.01—EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM
- POLICY—400.08—TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES: NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE
- POLICY 700.09 — DISTRICT AND SCHOOL SPONSORED WEBSITES

### **As a General Rule**

The District, its schools, and classroom teachers are encouraged to use official District and school social media accounts to communicate with students, parents, and the community. While there may be circumstances where it makes sense for a school to operate several accounts — some high schools, for example, have multiple accounts representing different sports teams — it's generally better to keep accounts limited in number so they are more easily managed. Several employees can be tasked with creating content for posting on a single account through one appointed social media manager.

Each school or District department must receive approval from Communications prior to establishing any official social media accounts. The Communications Department must be provided with administrator access to all District-affiliated social media accounts.

### **What is Social Media?**

We define social media broadly to include online technologies and platforms that enable individuals to digitally publish information, opinions, experiences and perspectives. Examples include Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, NextDoor, blogs, forums, wikis, LinkedIn, and YouTube. This document applies only to social media use in a non-instructional capacity, such as for keeping up with friends, family and colleagues, or publicizing school achievements, activities, programs and events.

### **Personal, Professional, and Official Use**

- Personal social media use is non-work-related, such as an employee’s personal Facebook profile or Twitter account.
- Professional social media use is for networking with colleagues or leveraging your standing, personality, or influence to advance the brand of the District and its schools.
- Official social media use refers to the management of an account or channel that represents the District, a school, program, classroom, department, or work-sponsored activity.

## **Guiding Principles**

No matter their purpose for using social media — personally, professionally, or in an official capacity — employees should be mindful that what they publish electronically is really never private. Online interactions should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and professionalism that are expected of employees in their daily work environment. When in doubt, stick to the following three principles: protect students, keep it professional, and use common sense.

## **Protect Students**

- It’s important for teachers to maintain appropriate boundaries with students and to safeguard student privacy in adherence with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Prior to publishing any photos or videos of students, identifiable classwork or student names, teachers must first confirm the students have signed media release forms on file in Skyward.
- We strongly recommend that teachers and staff not accept requests from students or parents to follow or friend them. Though it may seem harmless to share, like or engage with a student’s posts, doing so could be misinterpreted. Establishing connections with parents could also be misconstrued as showing favoritism for a student.
- All public employees are required by law to report to authorities anything they see that indicates child abuse or neglect.

## **Be Professional**

- As public school employees, we should model the same behavior we seek to instill within our students on the path to becoming good digital citizens. Use a professional tone on social media, strive to stay positive, and avoid personal attacks.
- Consider using privacy settings to limit access to your personal accounts, and make sure you regularly review and update your privacy settings.
- When using a professional account, employees are encouraged to include disclaimers in their profiles that the views expressed are their own and do not reflect those of the school or school district.

- Employees will not express opinions on behalf of Canyons District, or act as spokespersons for the District/schools unless explicitly authorized to do so.
- Before launching an official page to brand a department or program, consider how you will manage and respond to comments (not all platforms allow you to disable comments). Appropriately maintaining a social media account takes time and attention.
- Canyons District and its schools allow for the free exchange of ideas and opinions on their official social media channels, and account managers may not delete comments or posts unless they risk disclosing protected student information, including student identities, or something private about an employee, or the comments contain crude, vulgar, discriminatory, threatening, or libelous language.
- Official District and school accounts should adhere to and publish Canyons District's commenting guidelines as provided below. In instances where the guidelines are too long to include, because of a platform's profile limitations, please include [THIS LINK] to our guidelines.
- Posting content related to alcohol, tobacco and/or illegal substances is not permitted on official Canyons accounts unless it is for safety, wellness and educational purposes.
- The District and its schools do not endorse social media sites created and maintained by students, parents, or individual District employees. Such sites should not use the name or logo of the District, its schools, its departments or programs, or in any way indicate approval or endorsement of the site by the District or its schools.
- Employees who choose to create social media accounts or pages for classroom or instructional use must adhere to the same guidelines applicable to all school/District social media accounts, including the use of student photos.

### **Use Common Sense**

- Keep in mind that the lines between professional and personal communication are often blurred. Employees who use poor judgement on social media, even on a personal account, may run afoul of CSD's ["employee conduct" standards](#) and have professional consequences.
- Remember, the information you make public on social networks may be visible to parents, students, former and future employers and the media. While your posts may intend no harm, the wrong one can put you in the center of controversy. As a Canyons employee, your posts — whether personal or professional — reflect not only upon you, but upon the District. The content of your posts should not impair your ability to maintain the respect of students and parents or your ability to effectively perform your job. As a general rule of thumb: Don't share anything on social media that you wouldn't share in class.
- Appropriately cite any articles, quotes or material you share online.
- Check your sources! Be careful about sharing unsubstantiated information. How can you determine the truth of a Tweet or know which media outlets to trust? Here are some guidelines:

**Evaluating Information:** <http://guides.library.jhu.edu/c.php?g=202581&p=1335031>

**Evaluating Media:** <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/six-critical-questions-can-use-evaluate-media-content/>

- When managing a District-affiliated or school-sponsored account, avoid promotional content (including ads disguised as heart-warming, educational messages).

### **Official Canyons District Hashtags**

One way to build a social media audience for official District and school accounts is to tag @canyonsdistrict or use some of our official hashtags:

#WeAreCanyons  
#CSDistheplacetobe  
#TeamCSD  
#ThinkSafe  
#CanyonsLiving  
#StudentAchievement  
#Innovation  
#CommunityEngagement  
#CustomerService  
#FiscalAccountability

Questions? Please contact the Office of Public Communications at [communications@canyonsdistrict.org](mailto:communications@canyonsdistrict.org).

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### **Canyons District Commenting Guidelines for Social Media**

The guidelines below apply to all official Canyons District social media profiles. When creating an official District or school account, please adhere to and publish these guidelines in the account profile. In instances where the guidelines are too long to include, because of a platform's profile limitations, please include [THIS LINK] to our guidelines.

Welcome to the official [SCHOOL, PROGRAM, CLUB] [FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER, ETC.] page. This page is used as a communication channel to share information and news about Canyons School District, its schools, events, and programs. It is maintained and monitored by [SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT NAME].

This is a place for civil discourse. Canyons District is committed to transparency and to cultivating learning environments where people feel comfortable to express their opinions. We ask, however, that commenters respect the privacy of our students and employees and refrain from using crude, vulgar, discriminatory, threatening, and libelous language.

Content is not considered a permanent record and will be added or removed at the District's discretion.

We reserve the right to ban or report users who repeatedly violate these guidelines or comment with the purpose of:

- Using deliberately offensive or provocative comments to upset someone or elicit angry responses.
- Spamming with the intent to defraud or sell a product or service.
- Abusing copyrighted materials.
- Campaigning for a political cause, organization, or individual

Should you have questions about these guidelines, please email [communications@canyonsdistrict.org](mailto:communications@canyonsdistrict.org).