

## **University Schools Social Media Guidelines for Employees**

### *Purpose of Social Media Guidelines*

*All University Schools Laboratory Employees are subject to the Ball State University Social Media Policy available on the Ball State University Website. The intent of University Schools Social Media Guidelines is to further clarify policies and procedures related to working with minors in a k-12 school environment.*

University Schools recognizes the need to utilize contemporary methods of communication. To this end University Schools has adopted the following guidelines to provide direction for employees when participating in online social media activities. These guidelines are based on Ball State University's Social Media Policy. Employees should review and become familiar with these guidelines and the Ball State University Social Media Policy before participating in online social media activities.

University Schools does not infringe on employee freedom of speech legal rights and standards, but employees should know that there are limits to these legal rights and standards. For example, schools may discipline employees for an online posting that substantially disrupts or reasonably can be foreseen to substantially disrupt school operations. Any conduct that adversely affects an employee's job performance, the job performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects University Schools or Ball State University or any member, customer, supplier, or person who works on behalf of the School or University's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Ultimately, employees are solely responsible for their online social media activities.

The University Schools Social Media Guidelines for Employees, however, do allow and even encourage employees to participate in online social media activities that enhance quality teaching and learning.

When accessing, creating, or engaging in any form of online social media for classroom or University Schools use, employees must follow these guidelines.

### *What is Online Social Media?*

Online social media is user-created online content designed in an environment where users share opinions, knowledge, and information with others. Online social media can be accessed via computer or a mobile device. Such tools include, but are not limited to:

- Email
- Text messaging
- Blogs (Blogger, WordPress, etc.)

- Wikis (Wikispaces, Google Sites, etc.)
- Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing Sites (YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Dingo, Delicious)
- Podcasting and Video casting
- Interactive Online Games

### *Personal Responsibility*

Employees with a personal online presence are responsible for regulating their interactions in a professional manner and should be mindful of the information they share. Online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that are used in face-to-face interactions by those in the education profession. Employees should know and be mindful that content they generate could reflect both positively or negatively on the school and university.

Inappropriate online sharing that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees should always be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if a mistake is made, it should be corrected immediately. Employees are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the appropriate security settings for any social media type (personal or professional) they use. Employees should adjust the setting for all online social media to assure that any personal content may only be viewed by the employee's intended audience. It is important also to keep in mind that even if one's privacy settings are set properly, it may still be possible for anyone to see an employee's online content, regardless of whether the employee intended for them to see the content or not. Nothing posted or expressed in social media is truly private. It should be assumed at all times to be available to anyone.

Employees may not use online social media, text or email as defined in this policy to interact with a student or students on a matter that does not pertain to school. Appropriate uses of online social media would enhance or extend class instruction and learning, provide discussions to enrich student's homework, class activities, school sports or clubs, or other school-sponsored activities. Electronic communications with students should be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients and not to just one student, except where communication is clearly school-related and it is inappropriate for a person other than the targeted individual student to receive (for example, emailing a message about a student's grades).

Employees should communicate with parents and guardians of students via email or telephone from school-based email addresses, not via personal social-media networking, and do so in a professional and factual manner.

Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community should reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the school's or the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents/guardians or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children and youth.

Employees should only express their personal opinions. Employees should never represent themselves as speaking for Ball State University or University Schools unless clearly authorized to do so. If the school is a subject of the content, employees should be clear and open about the fact that they are employees and their views do not represent those of the university, school, or fellow employees. Employees are encouraged to use a disclaimer such as, "The content on this site is my own and does not necessarily reflect the views of Ball State University, University Schools, or any other part of the university."

### *Be Respectful*

Employees should always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, students, parents, volunteers, and people who work on behalf of University or University Schools. Employees should keep in mind that they are more likely to resolve work-related issues by speaking directly with co-workers or by contacting their supervisor than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if employees decide to post complaints or criticism, they should avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage students, parents, employees, or supervisors, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or any other status protected by law, University Schools, or Ball State University policy.

### *Professional Responsibility*

Online social media in the classroom is an extension of the physical classroom. What is inappropriate in the classroom is also inappropriate through online social media. Employees are encouraged to use existing university and school toolsets to interact with students.

Employees should also review any "acceptance agreement" or web-based external "cloud" service provider agreement that subjects the employee, the University, or University Schools to terms and conditions that do not protect confidential information including personally identifiable information about students protected by FERPA.

### *School Logos*

Employees must obtain written permission from the Superintendent or his/her designee for use of any University Schools logos and from the Associate Vice President for Marketing Communications or his/her designee for the use of any BSU logos.

### *Confidentiality and Copyright*

Employees should maintain the confidentiality of University and University Schools's trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal school-related confidential communications.

Employees using social media should follow copyright and fair use guidelines. For the protection of the University and University Schools, as well as the protection of individual employees, it is critical that employees show proper respect for the laws governing fair use of intellectual property. This applies to intellectual property owned by the Ball State University or University Schools, as well as intellectual property owned by others. Sources should be cited when quoting and can be hyperlinked. If hyperlinks are used, it is the responsibility of the employee using the social media to ensure that links are accurate.

### *Using Social Media at Work*

Employees should refrain from using social media for personal reasons during work time or on school-provided equipment, unless the purpose is school-related as authorized by the employee's supervisor. Employees should not use a University Schools or University email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use. If a University Schools Laboratory or University email address is utilized, you may be held responsible for any inappropriate conduct or content.

### *Retaliation is Prohibited*

University Schools and Ball State University prohibit taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from these guidelines, the Acceptable Use policy, or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This policy is not intended to prevent employees from engaging in discussions regarding their wages, hours, or working conditions with any other employee or engaging in protected concerted activity. Employees will not be disciplined or retaliated against for such discussions.

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