



Jackson Local Schools Social Media Guidelines

August 2020

These are the guidelines for social media for the Jackson Local School District. If you're a Jackson Local employee creating or contributing to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media both on and off the district's network, these guidelines are for you. We expect all employees who participate in social media on behalf of JLSD to understand and to follow these guidelines.



Social Media Philosophy

JLSD's social media philosophy is to create an empowered online community for all who have a stake in public education (everyone!) in which we:

- **Energize our Brand** As part of an effort to reach a new generation of parents, educators, and supporters, Jackson Local School District will use social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.) to update the community about Jackson Local programs and services as well as what's going on at schools across the district in timely and appropriately engaging ways. Communicating with our customers (students and parents) is more important now than ever.
- **Raise Awareness** Technology gives people greater access to unfiltered information, but people also get to choose what information they want to receive. If Jackson Local School District wants to reach these users, we have to provide not only the information we want them to have, such as how to learn more about JLSD programs and services, but also information they find interesting and useful. This results in increased visibility in the community for JLSD and the students and families we serve. Because social media is about sharing information, it is very likely the online community will take our messages and further distribute.
- **Providing Reliable Resources to the Public** Social media enables us to reach some audiences that didn't know they needed our services. We can use these new tools to promote our organization and local schools in unique ways, such as referencing articles about schools' needs and linking to JLSD resources to help.
- **Engage Our Community** Having a social media presence reminds the families and community members we serve we are an active part of the community. It also enables us to reach potential partners and donors who may not be familiar with JLSD. Effectively, it makes us more tangible.

In order to create that community, JLSD employees who oversee social media sites should aim to:

- **Be interesting:** Distributing boring information, or important information in a boring manner, is the quickest way to be ignored in the social media landscape. Be interesting but mindful anyone can see your social media posts. If you have a particular skill set, share tips with the community.
- **Post regularly:** Providing regular updates will remind the public we are a vital part of the community and help stake our online presence.
- **Encourage interactivity:** Social media is a two-way street. We seek to promote reader input and respond quickly to any query received via social media sites.

Rules of Engagement

Be transparent. Your honesty — or dishonesty — is quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are blogging about your work at JLSD, use your real name, identify your work for JLSD, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. If you publish something about an education-related topic on a website outside JLSD, please use a disclaimer that reads something like this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent JLSD's position or opinions." Please inform the Director of Communications about involvement in outside organizations that may bring attention to JLSD. Also, please respect brand, trademark, copyright, fair use, confidentiality, and student information disclosure laws. If you have any questions about these, please contact the Director of Communications.. Remember, you may be personally responsible for your content.

Be judicious and safe. Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and JLSD's confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate JLSD's privacy, confidentiality, and legal guidelines, including Board of Education and Administrative policies. All statements must be true and not misleading and all claims must be substantiated and approved. **Please never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties we are in litigation with without the appropriate approval.** Use of social media can present a heightened risk to private, personal, and confidential data. Photographs and personally identifiable information about students must be avoided in social media posts without proper media releases. For any student who is a ward of the court — on probation, in foster care — a court order from a judge is required before any photographs can be distributed to the public. When in doubt, it's best to obtain written permission. Contact the Director of Communications for clarity.

Write what you know. Make sure you write and post about your areas of expertise, especially as related to JLSD and our work. If you are writing about a topic JLSD is involved with but you are not the JLSD expert on the topic, you should not represent the JLSD in a public manner on such topics. Please refer those inquiries to the Director of Communications.

Perception is reality. In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as a JLSD employee, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about JLSD by the general public and perceptions about you by your colleagues and managers. **DO US ALL PROUD.** Be sure all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with JLSD's values and professional standards.

It's a conversation. Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. In other words, avoid overly pedantic or "composed" language. Don't be afraid to bring in your own personality and say what's on your mind. Consider content that's open-ended and invites response. Encourage comments. When possible, please refer to JLSC website or other social media posts to cross-promote information and drive people to our site, which is packed with resources.

Are you adding value? There are millions of words out there. The best way to get yours read is to write things people will value. Social communication from JLSD should help our customers, partners, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, do their jobs, solve problems, or better understand public education, then it's adding value.

Your Responsibility: What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social computing on behalf of JLSD is not a right but an opportunity, so please treat it seriously and with respect. Failure to abide by these guidelines could put your participation at risk. Please also follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites.

Create some excitement. As part of public education, JLSD is making important contributions to students in Stark County, to the future of education, and to public dialogue on a broad range of issues. We live, work and play in a community that values our schools and teachers. Let's share with the world the exciting things we're learning and doing—and open up the channels to learn from others.

Be a Leader. There can be a fine line between healthy debate and incendiary reaction. Do not denigrate those who disagree with us or JLSD. Nor do you need to respond to every criticism or barb. Try to frame what you write to invite differing points of view without inflaming others. Some topics—like politics or religion—slide more easily into sensitive territory and are wise to be avoided. Once the words are out there, you can't really get them back. And once an inflammatory discussion gets going, it's hard to stop.

Did you make a mistake? If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post—just make it clear that you have done so.

If it gives you pause, pause. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don't shrug it off and hit "send." **THIS MIGHT BE THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE ON THESE PAGES.** If you have questions, please reach the Director of Communications. Ultimately, what you publish is yours, as is the responsibility, so be sure. This applies to accounts for which someone is posting on your behalf.

Ohio Education Association has many useful suggestions on its website to guide social media use. [Please look at these practical Dos and Don'ts for social media for educators.](#)

More helpful links:

[How to manage your social media privacy settings](#)

[Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Educators in Ohio](#)

Should you follow or friend students on social media? [These tips and more from the NEA answer that question.](#)

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