

# Social Media *Guidelines*

- March 2023 -



## Overview

Social media use is increasingly part of our daily lives. While we often think of platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, social media includes any digital tool that allows individuals, organizations, and governments to create, share, and exchange information with others in online forums and networks. There are many **examples of social media tools** that connect individuals and empower them to generate and curate content that they can share with a global audience.

In 2022, the Greater Victoria School Board of Education passed **Policy 1305 – Social Media Use** to outline best practices for Trustees, employees and students. In addition to the policy, social media guidelines were created to foster greater understanding and productive use of social media amongst those in the Greater Victoria School District (GVSD) learning community.

These guidelines serve to inform all members of the GVSD—including parents and guardians—on the appropriate use of social platforms, both personally and professionally. Individuals must be mindful of how they present themselves and interact with others online, just as they are mindful when conducting themselves in daily social interactions.

This document outlines best practices to make the tools work to your benefit and how to foster positive interactions and relationships online.



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## Examples of Social Media Tools:



Facebook



WhatsApp



Vimeo



Instagram



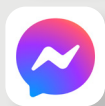
YouTube



Reddit



Twitter



Messenger



LinkedIn



Snapchat



TikTok



Pinterest

## Benefits of Social Media

Social media is excellent at creating a sense of connectedness and community. The two-way communication tool has many benefits, including disseminating important information quickly, bringing like-minded individuals together to collaborate, and allowing individuals to share and celebrate with friends and family members even at great distances.

While social media has many positives, there is diversity in how people interact online and how they choose to utilize the tools. Please see some important reminders below.

## Important Reminders

As a member of the GVSD learning community, what is important to remember about social media?

- *How often social media platforms evolve and the ways we use them*
- *How online content and publications can be perceived differently by various audiences*
- *How quickly and easily words and images can be circulated*
- *The need to align your real-world values and behaviour with your online ones*

Overall, it is important to understand the potential impact of our social media use on ourselves and within the context of our roles within the GVSD.



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## School District Values - Inclusivity

The GVSD's mission is to nurture each student's learning and well-being in a safe, responsive, and inclusive learning community. It values engagement, transparency, partnerships, respect, and integrity. As it strives to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning communities, it encourages us to create the same welcoming spaces online.

Some ways to promote inclusivity in your social media activity include:

- *Ensuring your posts treat others with respect and dignity*
- *Celebrating diversity in gender, race, culture, experience or ability*
- *Being mindful of pronouns and respecting those used by others*
- *Providing captions for images or audio captions whenever possible*



## The Greater Victoria School District's Core Values:

### Engagement:

We work to actively engage students in their education and make them feel connected to their learning.

### Equity:

We give each student the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

### Innovation:

We are innovative and consistently seek ways to make positive change.

### Integrity:

We are ethical and fair.

### Transparency:

We are accountable for the decisions we make and how we make them.

### Partnerships:

We create open and respectful partnerships with each member of our learning community.

### Respect:

We respect ourselves, others and the environment.

### Social Responsibility:

We share responsibility to work with and inspire students to create a better world.

### Sustainability:

We are proactive in the stewardship of the resources of our organization, our community and our planet.



## Cyber Safety & Privacy

It is critical to protect ourselves and others online. A few basic cyber safety tips include the following:

- *Limit and manage the personal information that you post publicly on social networks*
- *Choose strong passwords and do not share them*
- *Do not download or click on suspicious content*
- *Update your privacy settings on a regular basis within each platform that you use*
- *Do not share confidential information via social media (e.g., private information about classmates or colleagues, private communications, any other sensitive information)*



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## Online Bullying and Harassment

The School District does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment. Online content should not threaten any individual.

If you experience online bullying or harassment, please report it. Inappropriate content or comments can be reported to the platform in use. If you are a student, please report it to a trusted adult such as a Teacher, Principal, or parent. Resources are available to support you.

- *Regulation 1300.2: Employee Acceptable Use of Digital Technology*
- *Regulation 1300.3: Student Acceptable Use of Digital Technology*
- *Regulation 4303: Discrimination*
- *Regulation 4304: Bullying and Harassment*
- *Regulation 4116: Sexual Harassment*
- *Policy 8251: Trustees' Code of Conduct*
- *Individual School Codes of Conduct (found on school websites)*



## Copyright

Materials posted online, including artwork, photos, and videos, must comply with copyright laws and fair use guidelines. Do not post others' work without their permission, and once you have that permission, be sure to attribute anything you post to its creator.

Official GVSD logos or other branding images can be used only for authorized and official School District business, not for personal use.

### Quick Tips - Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ *DO think before you post. If you're unsure if your words might hurt others or cause harm, pause and reconsider. Remind yourself how quickly information can circulate online and how long it can last.*
- ✗ *DON'T post anything you don't want the world to see. Imagine your friends, teachers and colleagues visiting your social media. It is much more difficult to remove anything from social media than it is to put it on in the first place.*
- ✓ *DO be thoughtful about what you share online and consider how it reflects on you as a person – does it align with your real-life beliefs and values?*
- ✓ *DO use social media in a positive way: highlight your achievements, share useful information, and time enjoyed with friends!*



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## FOR STAFF:

As an employee of GVSD, the way you use social media is an excellent opportunity to model kindness, personal responsibility, and respect to students.

Before using social media, ask yourself:

- *Am I comfortable with my students/their parents, my employer, or the public seeing this?*
- *Are the photos, videos, or audio recordings I am posting susceptible to misrepresentation?*
- *Could my comments be perceived negatively by my colleagues or employer?*
- *How will my actions be perceived?*
- *Does my post reveal confidential information about students or colleagues?*
- *Am I using social media to enhance student learning or for personal reasons?*

Please refer to ***Policy 1305 – Social Media Use*** for more information.

## Profile Choices

If you list your job title or place of work or have photos of you that clearly identify you as a GVSD employee, people may draw a connection between you and your work duties, and this may shape their perception of you and the organization.

If your profile strongly associates you with the GVSD, people may believe that you're speaking in an official capacity rather than as a private individual.

When using social media, you're responsible for using your best judgment and reaching out when unsure. Seek guidance from your Principal or Supervisor if you are unclear about the appropriateness of your social media usage.

## Social Media in the Classroom

If you plan on using social media as a tool in the classroom, consider the following:

- *Determine if using social media will enrich the curriculum and enhance lessons*
- *Outline specific rules regarding students' use of social media and devices in your classroom – refer to your school's Code of Conduct*
- *Inform parents that you will be using social media as a teaching tool and outline how it will be used*
- *Consider creating a school-based account for interactions with students and use it exclusively for educational activities – do not use personal accounts in the classroom*
- *Do not accept friend requests from students on your personal accounts; make sure the privacy settings are up to date on your personal accounts*
- *Model responsible social media behaviour and ensure students are aware that you expect the same respect and consideration online that you expect in the classroom*



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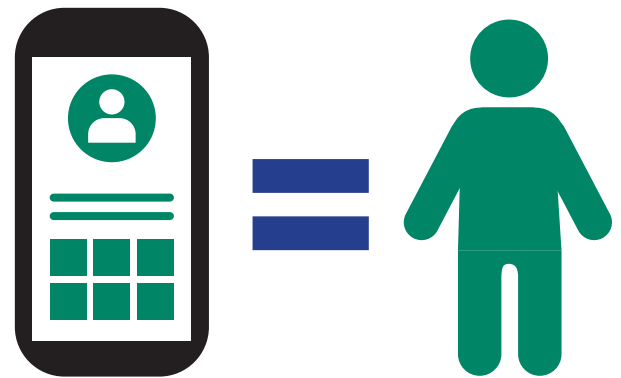
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## FOR STUDENTS:

Digital citizenship is a shared responsibility between students, parents, educators, schools and governments. Most social media platforms require their users to be at least 13 years of age before they can sign up for an account. Be sure to check in with your parents or guardians before joining any new platforms.

### Your Digital Self

- **Align your digital image with your real-life image:** any comments you make online leave a permanent record; it's much easier to apologize in person than online – first comments are often all people see in a thread
- **Your online behaviour can affect your future:** many employers search social media before hiring employees
- **Pause before you post:** take the time before you post to think about whether a comment could be hurtful or offensive to others
- **Consider the consequences: personal use of social media may have an effect at school.** Your school's Code of Conduct also applies to your digital self, including the expectation of responsible and respectful student behaviour
- **Stand behind your words.** Be truthful and responsible about what you say online, and remember that even using a fake name or account leaves a digital footprint that can be traced



### Protecting Yourself and Others

- **Adjust your privacy settings so not everything is available for public consumption**
- **Only accept friend requests from people you know**
- **If you interact online with people you have never met in person, ask a parent for permission if you plan on meeting them face to face**
- **Be yourself online, but don't post too much personal information like where you live or your exact birth date**
- **Don't share your passwords, even with close friends**
- **Delete expired social media accounts**
- **Respect the privacy of others – don't post images/videos or voice recordings of others without their permission**



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## FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Keeping your child safe online is a concern for many parents and guardians. It is good practice to have an ongoing conversation with your child around their social media use, your expectations about their online behaviour, and what they can do if they feel uncomfortable with any social media interactions.

- *Talk openly with your child around their use of social media – remain non-judgmental and supportive*
  - *Set up clear guidelines for how you expect your child to use their device and social media*
  - *Monitor your child for changes in behaviour – withdrawing from in-person interactions can indicate overuse of social media*
  - *Encourage your child to speak to a trusted adult (like a parent, Teacher, or Principal) if they have an online interaction that feels inappropriate, or if they feel bullied or harassed*
  - *Have a clear understanding of what cyberbullying means - it includes embarrassing, hurting, mocking, or threatening someone online using a computer, smartphone, or other connected device*
  - *Stay informed – social media platforms change quickly!*
  - *Model positive online behaviour*
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## APPENDIX

### Official Accounts

The Greater Victoria School District's official social media channels are:

- Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/SD61schools>
- Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/sd61schools>
- Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/sd61schools>
- YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/sd61schools>
- LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/school-district-61>

Tags:

[#sd61learn](#)

[#OneLearningCommunity](#)

[#sd61schools](#)

### Helpful Resources

- [Greater Victoria School District Social Media Use Policy](#)
- [Greater Victoria School District Acceptable Use of Digital Technology Policy](#)
- [Greater Victoria School District Student Acceptable Use of Digital Technology Regulation](#)
- [Greater Victoria School District Employee Acceptable Use of Digital Technology Regulation](#)
- [Erase Bullying BC website](#)
- [Student online reporting tool](#)
- [Media Smarts \(parent resource\)](#)
- [Need Help Now \(removal of posts and images online\)](#)

### Contact Us

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[www.sd61.bc.ca](http://www.sd61.bc.ca)

- [twitter.com/sd61schools](https://twitter.com/sd61schools)
- [facebook.com/SD61schools](https://facebook.com/SD61schools)
- [instagram.com/sd61schools](https://instagram.com/sd61schools)
- [ca.linkedin.com/company/school-district-61](https://ca.linkedin.com/company/school-district-61)
- [youtube.com/user/sd61schools](https://youtube.com/user/sd61schools)