

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

St. Thomas Episcopal School understands the importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in the fast-moving world of the Internet and “social media” – such services as “Facebook”, “Twitter”, “Shutterfly”, Wikipedia, “blogs”, and many other online tools through which people connect and share information. With this in mind, St. Thomas Episcopal School has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students and the school community when participating in online social media activities. Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in a blog, wikipedia, discussion forum, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion it is his or her own decision. However, to the extent that employees, faculty, parents and members of the school community represent St. Thomas Episcopal School to each other and to the wider community, participation in such social media should be done responsibly with a mind toward how both the location where one chooses to participate and the content one posts reflect on that person individually and on the School. Moreover, issues concerning the proper respect for the privacy of our students, confidentiality of sensitive information and respect for copyrights and trademarks are all important to understand before participating in an online social environment.

The St. Thomas Episcopal School social media guidelines encourage employees and students to participate in social computing and strive to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by St. Thomas Episcopal School, our faculty, staff, students and their parents is a reflection on the entire School community and is subject to our Acceptable Use Policy, the School’s Mission and the obligation to protect the children entrusted to us. By accessing, creating or contributing to Facebook, Twitter, blogs, discussion fora, wikis, podcasts or other social media for classroom or school use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before making use of such social media. If you have any doubts or concerns about how these guidelines apply to you or your situation, or how they might apply to some new form of social media in the future, please err on the side of caution and direct your questions and concerns to the Director of the School before you make use of such media. In the online world, an ounce of prevention is worth far more than a pound of cure.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Consult the employee manual and/or parent and student handbook. Be aware that all existing policies and behavior guidelines extend to School-related activities in the online environment as well as on School premises.

Use good judgment. Think about the type of image that you want to convey on behalf of the School when you’re posting to social networks and social media sites. Remember that what you post will be viewed and archived permanently online once you hit the “publish” button. On sites where you publicize your professional affiliation, make sure that your profile adheres to established criteria.

Provide value. Think about what you have to offer the community, whether it's thoughtful, relevant blog posts, newsy tweets, or homework help, and focus on providing that consistently. Look for opportunities on these social sites to offer recommendations or services to engage patrons and provide value to your community. Don't be an Internet "troll" by posting or passing along mass email forwards and urban legends (funny stories, videos, non-school photos and other "SPAM").

Accept responsibility. If you're wrong about something, admit it and move on. It's not the end of the world to have made a mistake, and in the long run it's better to be honest about it and apologize than to deny it or cover it up. People on the Internet are still people.

Copyright and Fair Use

- Respect copyright and fair use guidelines. See <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>
- Hyperlinking to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarize and give credit where it is due. If you are re-posting photos, videos, poems, music, text, artwork or other copyrightable material, take the extra step of identifying the creator of the materials to the extent reasonably possible.
- When hyperlinking to other sites and media, be sure that the content to which you are hyperlinking is appropriate and consistent with these guidelines.
- Be aware that photographs taken by professional photographers cannot be scanned and used on the internet without the photographer's permission – even if they are photos of you and for which you paid. Most photographers will charge a little extra for "digital rights" to photos.

Profiles and Identity

- Remember your association and responsibility with St. Thomas Episcopal School in online social environments. If you identify yourself as a School employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students and consistent with the image, purpose and Mission of the School. Remember how you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.
- No identifying personal information, such as full names, addresses or phone numbers should appear on blogs or wikis or other social media.
- Be cautious how you setup your profile, bio, avatar, etc. The same guidelines apply to this information as well as the substantive content you post.
- When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself make sure you select a school appropriate image. Also remember not to utilize protected images.

Social Bookmarking

- Be aware that others can view the sites that you bookmark.
- Be aware of words used to *tag* or describe the bookmark.
- Be aware of URL shortening services and verify the landing site they point to before submitting a link as a bookmark.

- Attempt to link directly to a page or resource if possible as you do not control what appears on landing pages in the future.

FACULTY AND STAFF GUIDELINES

Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Digital Images & Video

Personal Responsibility

- St. Thomas Episcopal School employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy and that of the school, our students and their families. Once materials have been published online, they may be out of your control.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face and should be carried out consistent with the standards applied on school premises and in furtherance of the School's Mission.
- When posting to a blog, discussion forum, or Twitter or Facebook account, be sure you make it clear that the information is representative of your views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of St. Thomas Episcopal School. Remember that blogs, wikis, discussion groups, and podcasts are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the online world. By virtue of identifying yourself online as affiliated with St. Thomas Episcopal School, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the School community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at the School and School's Mission.
- Don't participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumors or false information. Strive to speak the truth - and when you don't know, sometimes saying nothing is the best choice.
- When contributing online do not post confidential student information.
- Before posting videos and photographs of students to any online forum, including Facebook, Shutterfly, a blog or any other media, notify the Director in advance of posting them, letting him or her know the content of what you intend to post, where you intend to post it, and the identity of any St. Thomas staff, faculty or students depicted in the media. Photographs, videos and other digital content identifying St. Thomas students or their families should not be posted online without prior approval from the Director.
- Such materials should ONLY be posted to social media that provides reasonable protection against general public access and has tools in place to limit access only to identified or invited persons.
- Use of student time for social media should have an articulated and defined instructional purpose consistent with the School's Mission.

Disclaimers

- St. Thomas Episcopal School employees must include disclaimers within their personal blogs and other media in which they either identify themselves or are likely to be

identified as affiliated with the School that the views are their own and do not reflect on St. Thomas Episcopal School. For example, "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent St. Thomas Episcopal School positions, strategies, or opinions."

- This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt St. Thomas Episcopal School employees from a special or personal responsibility when posting online.
- Where online media are open to content and participation (such as comments) from students and parents, teachers are encouraged to carefully review and moderate such comments or disable their use.

Instant Messaging

- School employees are required to get authorization to have instant messaging programs downloaded on their school computers.
- School employees also recognize this same authorization is required for access to instant messaging programs that are available through web interfaces with no download.
- Avatar images and profile information should follow the same guidelines as the above *Profiles and Identity* section.
- A written request must be submitted to the Director for approval.
- When submitting a request to the Director please provide a statement identifying the program and explaining your instructional purposes for using the program.

Requests for Social Media Sites

St. Thomas Episcopal School understands that technology is constantly changing and that many sites have pedagogical significance for teacher and student use.

- If you would like to request that another online site be accessible to use for teaching and learning, please submit a request to the Director for review, identifying the online tools you wish to use, and your instructional purpose in using them.
- Requests will be reviewed by the Director and the School Board, if necessary, and these social media guidelines will be updated periodically throughout the school year as needed to keep up with emerging technologies and challenges in the online environment.
- A description should be provided of the intended use of the site and what tools on the site match your needed criteria.
- A link to the sites privacy policy should be included if possible, and printed and attached to your request if reasonably feasible.

STUDENT GUIDELINES

Due to the wealth of new social media tools available to students, student products and documents have the potential to reach audiences far beyond the classroom. This translates into a greater level of responsibility and accountability for everyone. Below are guidelines students in St. Thomas Episcopal School should adhere to when using Web tools in the classroom or in any way related to classroom or School activities.

Also understand that as a St. Thomas student you represent the School even when you are not posting to social media during classtime, and you should follow these guidelines anytime you post material that could identify you or your relationship to the School.

1. Be aware of what you post online. Social media venues are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Do not post anything you wouldn't want friends, enemies, parents, teachers, or a future employer to see.
2. Follow the school's code of conduct when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, do it in a respectful way. Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
3. Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures. Do not share your password with anyone besides your teachers and parents.
4. Linking to other websites to support your thoughts and ideas is recommended. However, be sure to read the entire article prior to linking to ensure that all information is appropriate for a school setting.
5. Do your own work! Do not use other people's intellectual property without their permission. Be aware that it is a violation of copyright law to copy and paste other's thoughts. It is good practice to hyperlink to your sources.
6. Be aware that pictures, videos, songs, and audio clips may also be protected under copyright laws. Verify you have permission to use the images, videos, songs or other clips.
7. How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity.
8. Blog and wiki posts should be well written. Follow writing conventions including proper grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. If you edit someone else's work be sure it is in the spirit of improving the writing.
9. If you run across inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, tell your teacher right away.
10. Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the project and/or access to future use of online tools.

PARENT GUIDELINES

Classroom blogs and other social media are powerful tools that open up communication between students, parents, and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a huge impact on learning. St. Thomas Episcopal School encourages parents to participate in such projects when appropriate, but requests that Parents act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the School community, but will be a model for our students as well.

Parents should adhere to the following guidelines:

Parents should expect communication from teachers prior to their child's involvement in any project using online social media applications, i.e., blogs, wikis, podcast, discussion forums, etc.

1. Parents will be asked to sign a release form for students when teachers set up social media activities for classroom use.
2. Parents will not attempt to destroy or harm any information online.
3. Parents will not use classroom social media sites for any illegal activity, including violation of data privacy laws.
4. Parents are highly encouraged to read and/or participate in social media projects.
5. Parents should not distribute any information that might be deemed personal about other students participating in the social media project.
6. Parents should not upload or include any information that does not also meet the student guidelines above.