

**Social Media Guidelines  
The Scarsdale Public Schools**

**DRAFT**

The use of Social Media has become a pervasive component of our digital lives. The Scarsdale Schools embrace the use of Social Media by staff and students. Social Media includes technology that is designed for instructional use, like educational blogging platforms, as well as tools that are primarily used to share social information, like Facebook. In addition, Social Media components can increasingly be found in instructional software, helping students to communicate and collaborate with others.

While the use of Social Media has many benefits, the improper use of this technology can be problematic. This policy was created to help staff and students understand the proper use of Social Media, allowing all members of our school's community to engage in productive work that also supports the instructional program.

**Key Understandings**

- Digital content posted on Social Media sites or anywhere on the Internet may live forever, even if it is deleted, and may be shared beyond the poster's intended audience.
- Others will see your Social Media presence, also known as your "digital footprint," and their perception of you could be shaped by the photos, texts, and videos that you post online.
- All use of District technology, including the use of Social Media, is governed by the District's Responsible Use Policy.
- Any violation of the following guidelines by staff or students may result in disciplinary action.

**Overall Guidelines for Scarsdale staff and students**

- Under no circumstance should inappropriate comments be made about any member of the school community. Any user who receives threatening or unwelcome communications or material should report them to a teacher, a school administrator or the Director of Technology.

- Your digital footprint affects the perception of you by others. Postings on Social Media are accessible to everyone in the world, so written content should demonstrate the proper use of grammar and punctuation.
- Students and staff should be careful about sharing personal information. This includes publishing content that may be considered sensitive or private, including birth dates, grades, and passwords. Do not post pictures of any students on your personal Social Media without parental permission. When posting any photos of students, all staff must respect the opt out policy.
- It can be difficult to separate the use of technology for personal and professional use. Staff should be aware that they may be identified as District employees, even when posting, commenting, or “liking” information on a private Social Media account.
- The District strongly recommends separating your personal Social Media postings from Social Media that is primarily used to communicate to parents, students and other members of the Scarsdale community.
- All members of the school community must respect copyright and follow fair use guidelines. Proper attribution should be used when citing sources.

### **Specific Guidelines for Students**

- The District’s Code of Conduct is applicable to the use of Social Media. Engaging in online discussions may result in disagreements, but all communication should be respectful.
- Students should check their school email regularly, and should only communicate with teachers via a teacher’s official school email address.
- It is inappropriate to use e-mail, text messaging, or social networking postings to discuss matters with teachers that are not school-related.

### **Specific Guidelines for Teachers**

- The District acknowledges that the use of Social Media can be a powerful and transformative educational tool for use with students, and can provide important communication to parents. Teachers are encouraged to use Social Media for education and communication.
- It is inappropriate to use e-mail, text messaging, or social networking postings to discuss matters with students that are not school-related.
- Engaging in social-networking non-academic friendships with current Scarsdale students is discouraged. The District acknowledges that teachers and students often participate in Social Media groups, like Facebook groups for academic purposes. This is a useful function of Social Media, and should continue to be used.

- Teachers should not require students to participate in Social Media or start a Social Media account.
- Teachers must acknowledge and respect age restrictions when using Social Media with students. Many services cannot be used by students under 13.
- The use of Social Media in your classroom allows you to teach beyond the walls of your physical school; material shared online should reflect the standards of your classroom.

Due to the nature of Social Media, which is constantly changing, it is likely that this policy will be updated annually.

*Some of the guidelines in this policy have appeared in or have been adapted from the Social Media Policies produced by the New York City Department of Education and the Papillion La-Vista School District.*