



# Jackson Public Schools

## Social Media Policy and Guidelines - Staff

### 1. PURPOSE

This policy has been created to assure that information disclosed by Jackson Public Schools (JPS) and its employees' is timely, accurate, comprehensive, authoritative and relevant to all aspects of the Jackson Public Schools system. In accordance with the JPS Belief Statement that there must be a clear alignment among curriculum, instructional practice and assessment, this policy will provide the framework to facilitate the timely dissemination of information. Adherence to this policy will reinforce its current non-discriminatory practices based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, weight, marital status, handicap, age, political affiliation, sexual orientation or disability or any other status covered by federal, state or local law.

### SCOPE

This social media policy applies to all JPS employees, teachers, students, Board Members and auxiliary personnel. This policy covers all social media and media platforms, social networks, blogs, photo sharing, wikis, online forums and video sharing.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Term:** Social Media Account

**Definition:** A personalized presence inside a social networking channel, initiated at will by an individual. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and other social networking channels allow users to sign-up for their own social media account, which they can use to collaborate, interact and share content and status updated. When a user communicates through a social media account, their disclosures are attributed to their User Profile.

**Term:** Social Media Channels

**Definition:** Blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, email or other existing or emerging communications platforms.

**Term:** Professional Social Media

**Definition:** Professional social media is a work-related social media activity that is either school-based (e.g., a JPS principal establishing a Facebook page for his/her school, school department or JPS teacher establishing a blog for his/her class), or non-school based (e.g., a Michigan Department of Education establishing a Facebook page to facilitate the department's administration of certain regulations).

**Term:** Social Media Disclosures

**Definition:** Blog posts, blog comments, status updates, text messages, posts via email, images, audio recordings, video recordings or any other information made available through a social media channel. Social media disclosures are the actual communications a user distributes through a social media channel, usually by means of their social media account.

**Term:** Controversial Issues

**Definition:** Issues that form the basis of heated debate, often identified in political campaigns as wedge issues, since they provoke a strong emotional response. Examples include political views, health care reform, education reform and gun control.

**Term:** Inbound Links

**Definition:** An inbound link is a hyperlink that transits from one domain to another. A hyperlink that transits from an external domain to your own domain is referred to as an inbound link. Inbound links are important because they play a role in how search engines rank pages and domains in search results.

**Term:** Hosted Content

**Definition:** Text, pictures, audio, video or other information in digital form that is uploaded and resides in the social media account of the author of a social media disclosure. If you download content off of the Internet, and then upload it to your social media account, you are hosting that content. This distinction is important because it is generally illegal to host copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

**Term:** Copyrights

**Definition:** Copyrights protect the right of an author to control the reproduction and use of any creative expression that has been fixed in tangible form, such as literary works, graphical works, photographic works, audiovisual works, electronic works and musical works. It is illegal to reproduce and use copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

**Term:** Official Content

**Definition:** Publicly available online content created and made public by Jackson Public Schools, verified by virtue of the fact that it is accessible through the Jackson Public Schools website (<http://www.jpsk12.org>).

**Term:** Blog

**Definition:** An online journal that contains entries or posts that consist of text, links, images, video or other media and is usually between 300-500 words.

**Term:** Microblogging

**Definition:** Posting brief and often frequent updates online. Unlike traditional blogs, which are often hosted on a custom website, microblogs are typically published on social media sites like Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and Facebook.

**Term:** Cyberbully

**Definition:** Cyberbullying is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not limited to email messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, Internet blogs, Internet chat rooms, Internet postings and defamatory websites.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. FACULTY AND STAFF GUIDELINES

#### **Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Digital Images & Video**

##### **Personal Responsibility**

- Jackson Public Schools employees are personally responsible for the hosted content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish on social media channels will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.
- When posting online, please remember that you are an employee of the Jackson Public Schools and representative of your colleagues, students, parents and the school community.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration that you use face-to-face.
- Blogs, wikis, and podcasts are an extension of your classroom and considered *official content*. What is inappropriate in the classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- Do not post photos or movies of fellow employees without their permission. Do not use photos or movies taken at school without permission. Do not post photos or movies that contain students without parental consent.
- There are many websites that allow users to share personally created movies. You are responsible for all you do, say and post online including videos. Anything posted online should represent you in a professional manner as others will see you as connected to JPS. It disrupts learning when teachers, employees and staff post videos with questionable content.
- When posting online be sure not to post confidential student information.
- Cyberbullying is not to be tolerated. Any incidence of cyberbullying should be reported to the school Principal immediately. All cyberbullying incidents are to be taken seriously.

##### **Personal use of social networking site, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**

- Jackson Public Schools staff and employees are personally responsible for all comments/information and hosted content they publish online. Be mindful that things such as *Tweets* and *Status Updates* will be visible and public for a long time.
- By posting comments, having online conversations, etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world, be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings, what you ‘say’ online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a ‘private conversation’ may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.
- Comments related to JPS, its employees, staff and/events related to JPS, should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.
- Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject where possible. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues are concerned.

- Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.
- Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and an extension of your professional life and classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall, then it should be considered inappropriate to post online.
- Microblogging (Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, etc.) comments made using such media are not protected by privacy settings. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and refrain from any comment and/or #hashtags that could be deemed unprofessional. #(Hashtags) that tag students and provide personal financial gain are prohibited. JPS students are not to be used a promotional audiences.
- **JPS employees are not permitted to solicit or accept “Friend” Requests from enrolled JPS students on any personal Social Media Account. This includes student’s accounts and JPS employee personal accounts.**
- **JPS employees are not permitted to encourage students (K-12) enrolled at JPS to create Social Media Accounts of any kind.**
- **All JPS employees who choose to utilize Facebook, Twitter or Instagram or any other Social Media Platform to provide classroom information to students and parents must create a "teacher" page. Posts must be exclusively about classroom or school activities.**

### **Staff-Student Relations**

Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to: employees fraternizing or communicating with students as if employees and students were peers such as writing personal letters or emails; “texting” students; calling students on cell phones or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework or class work; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students to do the same (other than professional counseling by a school counselor); and engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the Internet or in writing.

Employees who post information on Facebook, Twitter or other similar websites that include inappropriate personal information such as, but not limited to: provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, use of alcohol, drugs or anything students are prohibited from doing must understand that if students, parents or other employees obtain access to such information, their case will be investigated by school and district officials and if warranted, will be disciplined up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the offense, and may have their case forwarded to the appropriate state department for review and possible further sanctions.

The Superintendent or designees reserve the right to periodically conduct Internet searches to determine if employees have posted inappropriate materials online. If inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the Superintendent’s designees will download the offensive material and promptly bring misconduct to the attention of the Superintendent.

## **Email**

Jackson Public Schools in accordance with its **Board Policy 7540.03 – Student Education Technology Acceptable Use and Safety** policy, that all electronic or any other communications by employees to students or parents at any time, from any email system shall be expected to be professional, acceptable in content to any reasonable person, and limited to information that is school-related or is acceptable to both student and parent. Email between employees, students and parents shall be done through the school provided email application. Email must conform to school email policies<sup>2</sup>.

### **4. CYBERBULLYING:**

Cyberbullying by a JPS student directed toward another JPS student or school staff member is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment.

JPS prohibits acts of cyberbullying by JPS students through the use of any JPS owned, operated, and supervised technologies. The school principal or designee may report allegations of cyberbullying to law enforcement authorities.

Any act online, the Internet or through electronic devices (cellular phones, tablets) that deliberately threatens, harasses, intimidates an individual or group of individuals; places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual's property; has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school is considered cyberbullying.

Any student or school staff member that believes he/she has or is being subjected to cyberbullying, as well as any person who has reason to believe a student or school staff member has knowledge or reason to believe another pupil or school staff member is being subjected to or has been subjected to cyberbullying shall immediately make a report to the school principal or designee.

JPS has a zero tolerance against cyberbullying and each reported instance will be handled in accordance with district, local and state rules, policies and guidelines.

### **5. MEDIA, PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM**

A reporter, producer or other news media may contact you for a number of reasons, for example:

- To get information about Jackson Public Schools, teachers or employees.

- To get information about a recent, unexpected event such as natural disasters, thefts or arrests, accidents or injuries; parent or teacher complaints, federal, state or local regulatory actions; etc.
- To get information or comments about an action or event that could impact our school district, teachers and/or staff, students or changes in school or government policies.
- To get general information on a topical story in our community such as changes to local or state government officials or policies, problems or issues specific to the academic community.

Refer all media calls to your school's *Principal*. Please do not say you are not allowed to talk to a reporter or have to get permission to do so. Instead, tell the reporter: "JPS policy is to refer all media inquiries to the Principal."

Whenever taking a call from the media, the same courtesy and professionalism in which we approach our students and parents should be displayed toward the media. Please act quickly when approached by the media to ensure that the reporter's deadline is met. This is important because the way this call is handled may be the reporter's first impression of JPS and that first impression may end up in the story published or the news segment broadcast. In order to promote our JPS image, it is important to respond quickly, courteously and professionally to all media calls.

Please remember to contact your school's *Principal* if and when you have been approached by the media. Even though you have referred the media, the Principal will need to prepare a response. Do not let a reporter compel you to answer questions on the spot. It is always beneficial to prepare in advance in order to provide accurate and relevant information.

A similar process as described above will be used when someone from the media is requesting permission to take photographs or to film inside one of our facilities. Refer the caller to your school's Principal. No one will be given access to your facility/school for a photo or filming without approval from the Principal and equally important the Principal will not give approval without talking in advance with the District Superintendent and/or building manager.

Please know that each school's Principal will not send the media to any facility and/or building without prior approval by the District Superintendent and/or building manager. When dealing with reporters and camera crews who may show up unannounced, staff and employees should act with the same courtesy and professionalism as we approach our parents and students.

For school phone numbers and Principal names, please see the last page of this document.

## 6. BLOGGING GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES

JPS continues to explore how online discourse through social media channels can empower teachers, students, parents and staff. JPS understands the importance of these interactions in helping to communicate the highlights of academic collaboration and achievement. JPS is committed to continuing to explore new technologies and their best practices.

These Blogging Guidelines and Best Practices will help you to make appropriate decision about your JPS-related blogging, blog content curation, and your responses to comments and blogs. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are often blurred in the digital world.

By virtue of identifying yourself as a JPS District employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should make sure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at JPS District.

- All blogs and other media will be posted at the discretion of each school's Principal. Any blog or other social media involving JPS can be posted and/or removed at the Principal's discretion.
- All blogs and other social media sites are a communication channel of the Jackson Public School District and are to be maintained consistently throughout the school year.
- JPS District employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time. Remember to protect your privacy.
- As with all online interaction, as a JPS District employee, your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.
- Remember that blogs are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- You may not share information that is confidential and proprietary about JPS, its employees, students and/or staff.
- When blogging, be respectful of your colleagues. Be thoughtful and accurate in your writing, and respectful of how other JPS District members may be affected.
- Remember that blogs are *brief* and should not exceed more than 500 words. Be concise and know your audience.
- Do not comment on district or state-related legal matters, unless approved by your school's Principal. In addition, blogging about School Board decisions, financial information or other issues which may be controversial, please contact your school's Principal before publishing your post.

- When blogging online, do not post confidential student information, including grades, awards and/or disciplinary action. If you are unsure of what is considered confidential, contact your school's Principal.
- JPS District employees should include disclaimers within their personal blogs that the views are their own and do not reflect on JPS.
- Classroom blogs do not require a disclaimer, but teachers are encouraged to moderate content contributed by students.
- Remember to respect copyright and fair use guidelines. Be sure not to plagiarize and give credit when it is due.
- Blogs and comments related to JPS should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting or blogging, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.

## **7. DANGERS OF STUDENT SEXTING:**

- In Michigan, we currently have no specific legislation dealing with this issue, but students and guardians should be aware that sexting between teenagers can result in prosecution under state and federal child pornography laws. This brings with it very serious penalties. If a minor is convicted of any crimes associated with sexting (which includes creating, sending or sharing with others), he/she could serve time in prison, may have to pay heavy fines, and will likely be required to register as a sex offender. These penalties and charges can take place whether or not the sharing is consensual, and in cases where both students involved are minors.
- If a student is found to be sharing or distributing such material on Jackson Public School property, s/he will be handled individually and as a violation of the district's behavioral policies, and parents/guardians will be notified of the incident. In addition, as all members of school staff are legal, mandatory reporters of serious harm, and due to the fact that an offense of this type is categorized as child pornography, school officials will be required by law to report known occurrences to Michigan law enforcement.
- When talking to your student about their personal technology use, please advise your children that teens who choose to engage in sexting (whether as the sender or the recipient) could have their lives changed forever. In addition to prison sentences and fines that can accompany a conviction, current laws also require that those who are convicted must register as sex offenders on Michigan's Sex Offender Registry. The Sex Offender Registry is a public list of people who have been convicted of sex crimes. Being on this list can make it very hard for anyone to live a normal life. Those on the registry cannot live, work, or loiter near a school, and it is often very challenging for those on the list to find employment.
- While topics and discussions of this nature may feel challenging to approach, it is important to take the time to speak with your student about the consequences of these behaviors. We at Jackson Public Schools aim to provide a safe and healthy environment for our students, and are sharing this information as a means to ensure awareness and protection for our students, and in support their successful futures.



## 2023-2024 Jackson Public Schools

### School Principals and Administrators

<b><u>SCHOOL</u></b>	<b><u>Principal/Administrator</u></b>	<b><u>Phone Number</u></b>
Jackson Public School	Superintendent – Jeff Beal	(517) 841-2201
Cascades Elementary	Crescenda Jones	(517) 841-3900
Dibble Elementary	Martha Kuhn	(517) 841-3970
Fourth Street Learning Center	Krista Jarvey	(517) 841-2300
Hunt Elementary	Mary Jo Raczkowski-Shannon	(517) 841-2610
Jackson High School	Monica Pierce	(517) 841-3700
Jackson Pathways	Willie Lewis	(517) 841-3800
JPS Montessori Center	Robert Campbell	(517) 841-3870
John R. Lewis Elementary	Jill Weatherwax	(517) 841-2600
Middle School at Parkside	Krista Jarvey	(517) 841-2300
Northeast Elementary	Sandra Martin	(517) 841-2500
Sharp Park Academy	Jasper Lusby	(517) 841-2860
South Central Michigan Virtual	Fred Parker	(517) 841-2820