Social Media Policy (for Moses Brown employees)

Communicating through online communities and social networking sites including blogs, Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube have become everyday practice for millions of people. So that you can share or expand your knowledge, express your creativity, and connect with others, the school supports your participation in social media outlets, with the caveat that some features of social media are not conducive to maintaining a healthy school community.

The following guidelines have been assembled from industry sources to help you use social media effectively and honestly, and to protect your personal and professional reputation. These guidelines are drafted with the school's mission in mind, to uphold the utmost care for people, learning, and place. Questions about these guidelines, or about appropriate educational uses of social media, should be directed to the Director of Technology and/or the Director of Library Services.

For purposes of this policy, "social media" means any internet-based media created through social interaction, where users primarily produce and contribute to the content. Social Media include, but are not limited to, social or professional networking websites, wikis, blogs, virtual worlds, image-sharing websites, and video-sharing websites. The lack of reference to a specific social media website (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) throughout this policy does not limit the extent or application of this policy.

Model Appropriate Behavior

Social networking sites have permeated both the professional and personal life of employees, and have the potential to blur the lines between private and professional communication. Online behavior should be viewed similarly to any other behavior and should reflect appropriately on you as a member of the Moses Brown School community.

When communicating online in any social network, always work from the assumption that what you write, post or comment on is not private nor temporary, including status posts, photos, and videos. Make yourself aware of the privacy settings and policies of sites you participate in, understanding who owns the rights to information and images that you post.

The school's other behavior policies – including, but not limited to Harassment, Equal Employment Practices, Confidentiality, Non-Aggression and Code of Conduct – apply to online conduct, including via Social Media. Violations may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Key Principles

Interacting online with other employees, students, alumni, and others outside of the school community is no different than interacting with these groups face-to-face. Therefore, employees are required to maintain the principles of respect for the individual, dignity, honesty, professionalism, concern for and protection of children, security of intellectual property, , accuracy, and safety in all interactions.

Additionally, please be aware that:

• Your primary electronic communication vehicle with students and families should be through your Moses Brown School email address (see more below);

• All employees are accountable for content contributed to social media. This includes responsibility for any activities conducted with a school email address, while using school property, networks, or resources, and with specific reference or implication to Moses Brown;

• Exercise appropriate discretion when using social media for personal communications that can in any way impact your role at the school or the school itself. Adult behavior in social media may be used as a model by our students. If you choose to list or reference your work affiliation (where permitted by this policy), you should treat all content you contribute as if it were coming from your work email or as if you were interacting with someone on school grounds;

• Err on the side of caution when interacting online, remaining cognizant that any online activities are not private and may be visible to past, current, or prospective students, parents, colleagues, and community members, and thus reflect (positively or negatively) directly or indirectly on the school, affecting current students and community members;

• Keep in mind that the uneven power dynamics of the school, in which adults have implied authority over current and former students, continues to shape those relationships after the end of the school day and year, and even after graduation. Employees must act in a manner that always respects and never exploits the power inherent in these relationships;

• Balance the right of individual free expression with the valid interests of the school in promoting and presenting its mission, culture, and values to the community at large and in protecting its reputation;

• Reading and understanding privacy notices of any site you utilize is your responsibility and is an important practice to model for students.

Guidelines

Classroom / Professional Use of Social Networking

Educational tools continue to be enhanced through social media and faculty are encouraged to seek new educational applications of social media that expand opportunities for learning. Please consult the Director of Technology and the Director of Library Services for resources and training.

Connecting to Students, Alumni, and Parents

Moses Brown maintains a social media presence (e.g., a Facebook page) in which any person may become a "fan" and receive school communication. All official uses of, content or postings to this site or any other public sites will be initiated and allowed under the sole direction of the Head of School and Director of Marketing and Communications.

Alumni Connections

The school encourages employees to maintain connections to alumni. Due to the potential risks that come with social media, employees are strongly urged not to friend alumni who have graduated less than five years previously from Moses Brown. Employees should be aware that the following conditions are all possible:

a) Current Moses Brown students may be friends of alumni online, and therefore the current students may see faculty posts to the alumni accounts;

b) If current Moses Brown students are friends of alumni online, those students may also have indirect access to the faculty member's social network account, depending on the privacy settings of the faculty member;

c) Photos or videos of faculty members that are tagged by others may be available to anyone searching social networks;

d) Although uncommon, some social networks have become commonplace locations for deception and loss of privacy.

Student and Parent Connections

The school expressly prohibits all employees from initiating or accepting any social media connection requests (e.g., "friending" on Facebook) from current students (of any age).

Employees are discouraged from connecting to parents of current or prospective students, due to the inherent conflicts of interest that may arise at any time during a parent's connection to the school.

School-Related Friends (Co-workers, supervisors etc.)

Employees are asked to use good judgment when making and/or accepting connection requests to or from school colleagues. Employees in supervisor/subordinate relationships are particularly encouraged to use caution, due to the potential for both parties to feel awkward or pressured to accept the request and thus potentially impacting the work environment (as well as potential conflict of interest, unequal treatment, discrimination, or harassment complaints).

Privacy Settings and Content

Exercise care with privacy settings and personal profile content, to ensure that posted content does not reflect poorly on the school's reputation in any way, or otherwise create a conflict of interest. Content should be placed thoughtfully and periodically reviewed. On most sites, privacy settings can be changed at any time to limit access to profiles and searchability, and changes should be made when necessary. For help with these settings, contact the Director of Technology.

Time on Social Sites

Employees should refrain from using social media during work hours except for incidental and infrequent usage (e.g., spending a moment or two checking a site in between other work activities).

Employees are expected to limit their primary use of social media to hours outside of work – except for class-related and institutional marketing use. In no case may use of social media interfere or impede the employee's completion of his/her job duties and responsibilities to the school, our students, and other members of the school community.

Online Identity and Posting to Blogs

As a vibrant academic community, we encourage all employees to maintain active interest and engagement in a wide range of activities, intellectual pursuits, causes, missions, and the like – including social, political, religious, and civic-oriented groups, organizations, blogs, publications, etc. At the same time, this must be balanced with the school's right to manage public communications issued directly or indirectly in its name or on its behalf.

Do not contribute content to social media that could be considered a representation from or statement by the school. Be cautious of the guidelines listed here when using your school email address to register for social media.

Protecting Confidential Information

All employees are reminded that the school requires confidential information to be protected at all times and to be disclosed only pursuant to school policy or as otherwise required by law. Accordingly, no contributions to social media may contain any confidential information.

Do not post content on anything related to legal matters, litigation, employment negotiations, or any parties with whom the school may be in litigation or negotiations.

Use of Logos, Trademarks, and Intellectual Property

Employees are not permitted to use or alter the school's logo, trademarks, official photographs, or other intellectual property or proprietary materials in any online or offline content without the permission of the Head of School.

Please refrain from posting photographs, videos, or other images of school employees, students, parents, or community members without their written permission and the express permission of the Head of School.