

## St. Dominic Social Media Policy

### **Introduction/Purpose**

At St. Dominic (the “School”), teachers, students, staff, and other school community members use social networking/media as a way to connect with others, share educational resources, create educational content, enhance the classroom experience, and network within and outside of the school community. While social networking is fun and valuable, there are some risks we need to keep in mind when using these tools. In the social media world, the lines are often blurred between what is public or private, personal or professional.

St. Dominic is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders who utilize social media technology, including staff, students, and agents of the School do so in a safe and responsible manner. Our goal is to create a social media environment that reflects the supportive learning environment of our campus. The primary purpose of any School social media account established pursuant to this policy shall be communication of information from and about the School to school families and the larger Parish community, including communications issued for public relations purposes. This Social Media Policy will provide guidance regarding recommended and mandatory practices for social media communication between and amongst St. Dominic staff and students and the larger Parish community.

### **Definition of Social Media**

For the purposes of this Policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to:

- Blogs (Blogger, WordPress, etc.)
- Wikis (Wikispaces, Google Sites, etc.)
- Social Networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Ning, MySpace, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Diigo, Delicious, etc.)
- Podcasting and Vodcasting

### **Implementation**

1. All School-sponsored/related social media accounts shall first be approved by the School administration before they are activated or otherwise presented to the School staff, students, or public. At the discretion of the School Administrator, the School may choose to use its social media account(s) to include School announcements of the activities and accomplishments of any groups that have been organized primarily to support a School-related purpose, such as PTO, booster clubs, athletic organizations, etc. The non-school activities, events, or accomplishments of third party groups or

organizations that are not organized primarily to support a School-related purpose shall not be advertised or promoted through any School social media account(s).

2. At least two adults who are also employees, clerics, or volunteers of the School should have full administrative access to all School or School-sponsored website accounts and must also be approved to work with children in accordance with Archdiocesan policy.
3. Except for School-sponsored social media accounts that have been approved pursuant to this Policy, no School employee or other person acting as an agent for the School shall establish any account, site, page, blog, or other similar presence on a third-party website or on any other third-party electronic social media application that purports to represent, or that a member of the public would be likely to reasonably believe represents (e.g. due to the manner in which the information is presented), an official or authorized account, site, page, blog, or other similar presence of the School or any school-sponsored program or activity (e.g. athletic teams).
4. To the extent any School-sponsored social media application allows the account holder to offer a public posting option to users other than the account holder (i.e. a feature in which information can be posted by non-School users and displayed through the account for access by other public users), such a feature shall not be enabled in connection with the School-sponsored account.

### **Guiding Principles and Policies for School Employees**

1. School Employees should treat professional social media space and communications as they would a classroom environment or workplace. The same standards of professionalism are expected on professional social media sites. If a particular type of behavior is inappropriate in the classroom or professional workplace, then that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media site. Professional social media accounts will be considered as extensions of the classroom environment.
2. Although the lines between public and private, personal and professional, can become blurred in the digital world, you will always be considered to be a St. Dominic School employee. Whether it is clearly communicated or not, you will be identified as an employee of the School in what you do and say online. As such, School employees should not engage in online activity that would cause scandal or express a disregard for trying to faithfully live as a disciple of Christ. This activity includes, but is not limited to: inappropriate images or dress; advocacy of inappropriate music, movies or entertainment; obscene, profane or vulgar language; communication or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory; encouragement of illegal or immoral activity; and advocacy of inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs.
3. School employees shall respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about students, colleagues (including

administrators), nor the School in general. Negative comments about people may amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offense. Posts and comments should help build and support the School community. School employees are responsible for what they post, even if on a personal page.

4. As a recommended practice, School employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. School employees need to be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings and anything published on the Internet can easily become public (e.g. it is easy for others that you have permitted to see your profile to copy and paste text, take “screenshots” and “tag” or identify you in photos they publish with or without your knowledge or permission and send it to someone else). School employees are responsible for understanding the rules of personal social media sites.

5. School employees shall not post or otherwise disclose any personally identifiable student information, student images, or confidential information on personal social media sites without written parental consent, except for images taken in the public arena, such as at sporting events or fine arts public performances. This written permission is already included as part of the standard permission/release form for any event. The posting or disclosure, on any School-sponsored social media site, of any photos or videos of students who are on the “Do Not Photo” list is strictly prohibited. Even with permission to utilize an identifiable image of a child on any social media account, youth should not be identified by anything more than a first name.

6. School employees shall not use the St. Dominic logo or make representations that their personal social media sites speak in an official School capacity. If an individual identifies him/herself as an employee of the School on a personal social media account, the account should include the following disclaimer: “The views expressed on this account are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of St. Dominic School or the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.”

7. School employees are prohibited from disclosing via the internet information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates. School employees are prohibited from disclosing via the internet any information that is proprietary to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates, except by explicit permission of the appropriate authority.

8. School employees shall not “friend” students and are advised to not add parents as friends to their personal accounts. The School recognizes that because of the tight-knit community of St. Dominic, many School employees may have students or parents of students that are family members or close personal friends. However, the School cautions said School employees against engaging in such social-networking friendships with these individuals. School employees are encouraged to create official school or work-related page(s) and to instead utilize these as set forth elsewhere in this Policy.

9. Any and all digital communication between School employees and students shall be restricted to educational or religious purposes only. School employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of inappropriate relationships include but are not limited to, fraternizing or communicating with students as if they were peers such as writing personal emails; personally texting or calling students or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework, classwork, or other school or parish-related business; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students (other than professional counseling by a School counselor); and engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the Internet, or in writing.

10. When using group messaging services, group texting services or similar programs with children, at least one adult approved to work with children shall be included in the messages.

11. Any online contributions to School-sponsored social media sites should be well written. Following writing conventions including proper grammar, capitalization, and punctuation is expected.

12. Any online contributions to School-sponsored social media sites must respect copyright and fair use guidelines. If sharing what another has said, link to the source and use the embedded content. Be sure to cite your source when quoting. When using a hyperlink, confirm that that link goes where it should and that the content is appropriate. Keep in mind that copyright and fair use also apply to music. Do not post presentations or videos using popular music, or any music or art that you have not obtained the appropriate permissions for use. For example, purchasing something for personal use does not mean that you have purchased the right to broadcast it to others online.

13. When using Social Media for instructional use, School employees shall:

- Share responsibility for modeling appropriate behavior and creating an online environment where mutual respect, tolerance and civility among students and staff are promoted.
- Discuss all aspects of the Social Media Policy before using social media for instructional purposes.
- Monitor online learning platforms used in instructional activities.
- Report any complaints or incidents involving social media to the School administration.

14. School employees who interact with children shall be aware of and comply with all aspects of the *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act* and the *Decree on Child Protection* for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates will review alleged violations of the above-mentioned Act and Decree on a case-by-case basis. In the event that a provision of this Social Media Policy cannot be reconciled with the above-mentioned Decree, the provisions of the Decree will prevail.

## Guiding Principles and Policies for Volunteers

1. School volunteers shall not post or otherwise disclose any personally identifiable student information, student images, or confidential information on personal social media sites without written parental consent, except for images taken in the public arena, such as at sporting events or fine arts public performances. This written permission is already included as part of the standard permission/release form for any event. The posting or disclosure, on any School-sponsored social media site, of any photos or videos of students who are on the “Do Not Photo” list is strictly prohibited. Even with permission to utilize an identifiable image of a child on any social media account, youth should not be identified by anything more than a first name.
  
2. School volunteers are prohibited from disclosing, via the internet, information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates. School volunteers are prohibited from disclosing, via the internet, any information that is proprietary to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates, except by explicit permission of the appropriate authority.
  
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5. School volunteers who interact with children should be aware of and comply with all aspects of the *Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act* and the *Decree on Child Protection* for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates will review alleged violations of the above-mentioned Act and Decree on a case-by-case basis. In the event that a provision of this Social Media Policy cannot be reconciled with the above-mentioned Decree, the provisions of the Decree will prevail.
  
6. School volunteers shall respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about students, staff (including administrators), nor the School in general. Posts and comments should help build and support the School community. School volunteers are responsible for what they contribute to any School-sponsored social media site.

## **Guiding Principles and Policies for Students**

1. Everything you post is public information. Any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is posted, even if you limit access to your profile. Any posted/published information (including pictures, videos, and comments) may be accessible even after you remove it.
2. Students are responsible for their own behavior when communicating via social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications that they state/post on social media sites. Use good judgment—do not post anything when you are angry, upset, or your judgment is impaired in any way and do not post anything you wouldn't say in a public forum when representing St. Dominic.
3. Consistent with the Code of Conduct found in the student handbook, Students are not permitted to use personal social media accounts on school premises during school hours.
4. Students must respect the laws for governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others. Students should always properly cite any work originally produced by another and should link to other's work rather than reproduce it.
5. Students must respect the privacy of other students, staff, and other members of the School community and must not post confidential information that includes things such as student information (e.g. home address, phone number, birth date, etc.), grades, or any other personal, sensitive information that would identify individuals.
6. Students must take responsibility for helping to create a safe school environment on and offline by reporting bullying or hazing to a trusted School teacher or administrator. Consistent with the policy set forth in the St. Dominic student handbook, students shall refrain from participating or contributing to cyber-bullying, which is bullying through digital means such as via text message, image, video, message, website post, social media activity, or other form of communication sent by an electronic device.
7. Students should make sure that utilizing social media does not interfere with their functions as a student, or other commitments to St. Dominic and themselves.

### **Consequences for Inappropriate, Unauthorized, or Illegal Use**

Any violations of this Social Media Policy may result in loss of access and a variety of other disciplinary actions, including but not limited to, warnings, usage restrictions, loss of privileges, position reassignment, oral or written reprimands, student suspensions, employee suspensions (with or without pay), dismissal, expulsions, breach of contract, penalties provided in statutes, regulations, and other laws and/or legal proceedings on a case-by-case basis.

This Social Media Policy is not intended to, nor shall it be interpreted to supersede, replace, or otherwise supplant any applicable state or federal law or regulation or any similar policy of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The School Administrator and/or designee, is hereby granted the authority to create additional administrative regulations, procedures, guidelines, policies, and rules to carry out the purpose of this Social Media Policy.