



DeSoto ISD Social Media Policy and Guidelines

DeSoto ISD continues to expand its social media strategy to more responsively and effectively extend the district's narrative as a reflection of the students, staff, and families represented in our school community alongside updates, developments, and other relevant information.

In order to ensure a multi-platform coverage of the district, DeSoto ISD has a consistent and regular presence on the following platforms:

Facebook (Updated Daily)

Facebook is the district's largest social media platform with more than 10,000 followers.

Facebook is targeted toward families and community members and is a great way to share varied types of information in different and engaging formats.

Instagram (Updated Daily)

Instagram is a photo and video-based platform targeted toward older DeISD students, alumni and parents.

Twitter (Updated Daily)

The district's Twitter platform is primarily followed by staff and, therefore, has a deeper internal Communications focus designed to keep staff informed with quick bits of info for employees to share online.

YouTube

The DeSoto ISD YouTube page is growing and evolving. With more video-based content in development, the district continues to explore more ways to utilize YouTube for both internal organizational meetings and events and external messaging.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

General Guidelines

Sharing district News, and events, or promoting staff and student work through social media tools is an excellent, low-cost way to engage the community and build our brand.

Employees are encouraged to repost and share information with their networks that are available to the public such as press releases, and articles in the DeSoto ISD Online Newsroom.

The best way to share district news is to link to the original source via the website or to share from the district's social media platforms.

When sharing information that is not a matter of public record, please follow the below guidelines.

Development of Social Media for Campuses and Departments

Campuses and departments, teams, extracurricular activities, or other groups who are officially affiliated with DeSoto ISD are permitted to develop social media accounts without the express written consent and permission of the Communications Department.

All requests for accounts should be made in writing to the Communications Department and reviewed and approved by the Communications Director.

The Communications Department will develop and brand the requested platform and issue access to two parties to manage the platform.

Best Practices:

- Post content unique to the campus or department at least three times per week.
- Repost or share content from the District's social media platforms, particularly information related to districtwide news, events, and initiatives.
- Do not post students unless the student has a documented media release on file. When posting students who have a media release on file, only refer to the student by his or her first name unless the student is being recognized for honor, in which case, it is permissible to use the student's full name.
- Check for spelling and grammar errors.
- Ensure all content aligns with the district's vision, mission, and values as well as employee and student code of conduct standards and expectations.

Maintain Confidentiality

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the district, its students, its alumni or your fellow colleagues.

Use good ethical judgment and follow district policies and federal requirements, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Maintain Privacy

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission.

As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum.

Adults may be referenced by first and last name. Students may be referenced by first name only. Please ensure students featured on social media have a media release on file confirming parental consent to use the student's name and likeness.

Students recognized for receipt of awards and recognitions may be referenced by first and last name.

Time and Property

It's appropriate to post at work if captions and comments are directly related to promoting, advancing or accomplishing work goals, partnerships, opportunities, awards and recognitions related to the business and efforts of the district.

Employees should participate in personal social media conversations on their own time **AND NOT DURING SCHOOL HOURS** and in accordance with district professional and ethical standards as noted in the Employee Handbook.

Do No Harm

Let your Internet social networking do no harm to the district or to yourself whether you're navigating those networks in regard to your identity as an individual private citizen or as an employee of the district.

Understand Your Personal Responsibility

DeSoto ISD staff and faculty are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis or any other form of user-generated content.

Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time— protect your privacy.

Be Aware of Liability

Employees are responsible for posts or content on their own site(s) and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts).

Increasingly, employers are conducting Web searches on job candidates before extending offers including DeSoto ISD.

Be sure that what you post will not reflect poorly on your character.

Maintain Transparency

The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred: Be thoughtful about posting content and potential audiences. Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a district employee or staff member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of the district.

Correct Mistakes

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your corrections. If you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post—just make it clear that you have done so.

Respect Others

You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

Be a Valued Member

If you join a social network, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Don't hijack the discussion and redirect by posting personal or organizational promotional information.

Self-promoting behavior is viewed negatively and can lead to being banned from Web sites or groups.

Think Before You Post

There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post.

If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Post only pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public (current and future peers, employers, etc.)

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES WHEN POSTING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

DeSoto ISD uses social media to supplement traditional press and marketing efforts. Employees are encouraged to share district news and events, which are a matter of public record, with their family and friends. Linking straight to the information source is an effective way to help promote the mission of the district and build community.

When you might be perceived online as an agent/expert of DeSoto ISD, you need to make sure it is clear to the audience that you are not representing the position of the district or its policy.

While the guidelines below apply only to those instances where there is the potential for confusion about your role as a district agent/expert versus personal opinion, they are good to keep in mind for all social media interactions.

When posting to a social media site you should:

Be Authentic

Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a district employee or staff member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a formal representative of DeSoto ISD.

If you identify yourself as a member of the DeSoto ISD school community, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues.

1 **Use a Disclaimer:** If you publish content to any website outside of that of DeSoto ISD and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with DeSoto ISD, use a disclaimer such as this: “The postings on this site are my own and do not represent DeSoto ISD’s positions, strategies or opinions.”

2. **Don’t Use the District Logo or Make Endorsements:** Do not use the district seal, “DE” Spirit Logo or wordmark, or any other district marks or images on your personal online sites. Do not use the district’s name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.

3. **Take the High Ground:** If you identify your affiliation with DeSoto ISD in your comments, readers may associate you with the district, even with the disclaimer that your views are your own. Remember that you’re most likely to build a high-quality following if you discuss ideas and situations civilly.

Don’t pick fights online.

Don’t Use Pseudonyms.

Never pretend to be someone else. (Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to their authors.)

4. **Protect Your Identity:** While you should be honest about yourself, don’t provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Don’t list your home address or telephone number. It is a good idea to create a separate email address that is used only with social media sites.

Does it Pass the Publicity Test?

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or ten years from now?

Respect Your Audience

Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the DeSoto ISD school community.

You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive —such as politics and religion.

Monitor Comments

Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments— it builds credibility and community. However, you may be able to set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear.

This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES WHEN POSTING ON BEHALF OF DESOTO ISD

Online collaboration tools provide low-cost communication methods which foster open exchanges and learning.

While social media tools are changing the way we work and how we connect with the public and other higher education institutions, DeSoto ISD policies and practices for sharing information remain the same.

In addition to the general guidelines, when creating or posting to a social media site on behalf of the district, employees should:

Setting Up A Social Media Account

District-approved and -affiliated social media accounts will be developed and published through the DeSoto ISD Communications Department.

Employees are not authorized to create accounts without the approval of the Communications Department.

Use of the district logos or variations of the district brand is not permitted without express written consent from the Communications Department.

If you desire to create a social media site on behalf of the district, the Communications Department can provide guidance and support with graphics and the development of such an account.

Seek Approval

Any messages that might act as the “voice” or position of the district or a school/campus/program must be approved by the Communications Department.

Be Accurate

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible -- that's how you build community.

Be Transparent

If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the district, clearly state your role and goals. Keep in mind that if you are posting with a district-approved or -affiliated username, other users do not know you personally. They view what you post as coming from the district.

Be careful and be respectful. What you say directly reflects on the district. Discuss with your supervisor the circumstances in which you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

Be Timely

Assign an administrator who can regularly monitor postings and content. Aim for standard times for postings and updates. The recommended minimum frequency is two to three times per week. But be sure not to overload your updates. Followers will stop paying attention if you overload them with information.

Be Responsible

What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social computing on behalf of DeSoto ISD is not a right but an opportunity, so please treat it seriously and with respect. If you want to participate on behalf of the district, be sure to abide by its standard practice guidelines.

Respect Others

Users are free to discuss topics and disagree with one another, but please be respectful of others' opinions. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

Be a Valued Member

If you join a social network like a Facebook group or comment on someone's blog, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Post information about topics like district events or a book or article you've authored that aligns with the work of the district and its professional standards only when you are sure it will be of interest to readers.

In some forums, self-promoting behavior is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from websites or groups.

Be Thoughtful

If you have any questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain kinds of material in your role as a district employee, ask your supervisor or contact the Communications Department before you post.

SAFETY & PRIVACY TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING

The internet is open to a worldwide audience. When using social media channels, ask yourself:

1. Did I set my privacy setting to help control who can look at my profile, personal information and photos? You can limit access somewhat but not completely, and you have no control over what someone else may share.
2. How much information do I want strangers to know about me? If I give them my cell phone number, address, email, class schedule, and a list of possessions (such as my CD collection) how might they use it? To whom will they share it? Not everyone will respect your personal or physical space.
3. Is the image I'm projecting by my materials and photos the one I want my current and future friends to know me by? What does my profile say to potential faculty members/advisors? Future graduate school/internship interviewers? Potential employers? Neighbors? Family? Parents? Which doors am I opening and which am I closing?
4. What if I change my mind about what I post? For instance, what if I want to remove something I posted as a joke or to make a point? Have I read the social networking site's privacy and caching statements? Removing material from network caches can be difficult. Posted material can remain accessible on the internet until you've completed the prescribed process for removing information from the caching technology of one or multiple (potentially unknown) search engines.
5. Have I asked permission to post someone else's image or information? Am I infringing on their privacy? Could I be hurting someone? Could I be subject to libel suits? Am I violating network use policy or HIPAA privacy rules?
6. Does my equipment have spyware and virus protection installed? Some sites collect profile information to SPAM you. Others contain links that can infect your equipment with viruses that potentially can destroy data and infect others with whom you communicate. Remember to back up your work on an external source in case of destructive attacks.