



Instagram Manager Guidelines

Introduction

These guidelines are for those who develop, post and manage Bloomington Public Schools school and program Instagram accounts. The guidelines outline how to set up an Instagram account and provide best practices to communicate and engage with audiences.

Managers of school and/or program Instagram accounts must review these guidelines and obtain approval from the Community Relations Office prior to going live. Contact communications coordinator [Stephen Rydberg](#).

Setting up an Instagram Account

- Go to [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com) or download the Instagram mobile app and create an account [following their instructions](#).
 - **Profile photo:** The photo associated with your account should be your school or program logo or something that otherwise represents your school or program.
- Once the steps are completed, contact Community Relations for approval before the page is announced or goes live.
- Only personnel assigned to manage a social media account will have access and login rights. Passwords must be kept in a secure location and must not be shared with other users. Passwords should be changed when new admin rights are transferred to another staff person, in the event of a breach or hack of the site, or as a best practice, every six months.

Announcing your Instagram Account

The success of your Instagram is dependent on building a following. Determine your target audience and announce the page is live using existing resources to reach those people.

- Consider using a Blackboard Connect message, Google Group posting, website posting, newsletter, or announcements at PTA meetings or school/program events.
- It may take time to build a following. Community Relations can help with strategies for gaining followers.

Posting Content

Once Community Relations has approved the account, you can begin posting photos.

- Keep your account up-to-date by posting a minimum of 3 times per week.
- Post photos of school/program events, awards, and news.

- Experiment with some of Instagram's features like posts with multiple photos, stories, reels and more.
- Take note of what engages with your audience based on content, day of the week and time of day.
- Always inform classroom parents/guardians that you have a classroom Instagram account.
- **Please remember students cannot have their image posted if they are listed on the district's "Do Not Photo" list. Contact Community Relations for a copy of this list.**

Engaging Users

- Social media is reciprocal. Refrain from simply broadcasting a message, and try to participate in a dialogue with your followers.
- Questions from your followers should be answered within 24 hours, or the next business day if the inquiry occurred over the weekend.
- It may be useful to create a hashtag to talk about your school or program. A hashtag is the pound sign (#) followed by the topic (letters and numbers only; no punctuation or special characters), which becomes a clickable link that takes users to other tweets about that topic.
 - For example, if a Jefferson High School account tweets about its sports teams, it may wish to use the hashtag #JagAthletics.
 - Search Twitter for your desired hashtag before using it. If there are other users tweeting with the hashtag #JagAthletics that aren't relevant to your school, using a different hashtag like #JeffersonAthletics may be more specific to your school.
 - Or, use the district hashtag, #WeLoveBPS, or #BPS100 for Centennial-related content.

Responding to Negative Comments

- Negative comments from your followers may damage your school's or program's reputation and should be taken seriously. Please review the following guidelines, or contact a member of Community Relations for advice.
 - Review the [Rules of Engagement on Bloomington Public Schools Social Media Sites](#).
 - If a user posts a comment or tags your account in a comment or image that violates the Rules of Engagement, delete the comment if appropriate and send the user a private message if possible to resolve the situation.
 - If the user persists and continues to violate the Rules of Engagement, consider blocking the user. Blocking a user should be a last resort action taken only when a private discussion doesn't resolve the issue, and the user has made repeated posts that violate the Rules of Engagement. Page managers should take screenshots of abusive posts before they are deleted for documentation and keep a list of blocked users.
- If the negative post does not violate the Rules of Engagement, but contains inaccurate information about your program/school – respond to the negative post with correct information and ask for the person to call you directly to discuss the matter further.
- Wait to respond. Often another follower will respond with an alternative, positive perspective to the negative remark. Should this occur, it may not be necessary for you to respond depending on the validity of the counter argument.

Understand the Risk

- Individuals are personally responsible for the content published on any social media platform, blog, or other user-generated media.
- Outside parties can pursue legal action against you (not your organization) for posts.

- Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time.
- Understand your page's content could generate media coverage. All posts are public and could be used for or against your organization in a news story. **All media requests should be directed to Community Relations immediately.**
- Represent district values, expressing ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Building trust and responsibility in relationships extends to online communications. Do not denigrate or insult others including students, staff, administrators, parents, or other districts. Do not use ethnic slurs or obscenity. Even though you are of legal age, consider carefully what you post through comments and photos. School districts and other businesses and organizations are able to take disciplinary action on staff who make posts relative to alcohol, sexual activities or weapons with the exception of school-sponsored activities (ex. trap-shooting teams).

Failure to adhere to guidelines may lead to revoking the privilege to manage a district-affiliated account, including deleting the account.