Fonda-Fultonville Central School District

Social Media Handbook

Fonda-Fultonville Social Media Handbook

Introduction

Social media has changed the way we communicate, both as a district and as individuals. With such tools as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, anyone with an Internet connection now has the ability to create a dynamic web presence, update it from wherever they want and share their content instantly with friends and followers around the world.

Fonda-Fultonville's Goal:

Social media has given Fonda-Fultonville the opportunity to engage in ongoing "conversations" with our students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, colleagues and community about what is most important to them. It has also given us the ability to integrate new learning technologies into our classrooms and engage in a 21st-century learning environment.

Fonda-Fultonville supports the use of social media by members of our district to connect with students, faculty, alumni and community members and to aid classroom learning. This handbook provides guidance on how to do so effectively, safely and within district guidelines.

Who to Contact:

Social media is constantly changing. As a result, this handbook will be reviewed and continue to evolve on a consistent basis. If you have suggestions, please contact the district's Communications Office at communications@ffcsd.org or (518) 853-4415 ext. 4203.

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What is Social Media?

Social media refers to online tools and services that allow any Internet user to create and publish content. Many of these sites use personal profiles where users post information about themselves or the group represented. The "social" in social media comes in as these individuals or groups find others with similar interests, or within our district's community, and interact with them through online platforms, sharing information and knowledge, offering support and networking.

Social media also allows for the easy sharing and re-purposing of existing content, expanding the reach of your work and enabling others to share it with their friends and networks.

We encourage teachers, students, staff and other school community members to use social media as a way to connect with others, share educational resources, create and curate educational content and enhance the classroom experience. While social media can be fun and valuable, please review Fonda-Fultonville's policies and guidelines before engaging in the use of social media within the district or when representing Fonda-Fultonville online.

Popular social media services include:
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Blogs
- YouTube

How Fonda-Fultonville Uses Social Media

As an institution, Fonda-Fultonville has been an adopter of social media, as these tools enable the district to share what is happening in our schools with our community, but most importantly, to let us hear directly and immediately from students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni and community members about what is important to them. This "conversation" is what makes social media so different from traditional forms of institutional communications.

Our goal is to create a dialogue with our school community and we cannot do this without collaboration. On the district level, we use social media to engage with members of our community, whether they are parents, staff, students or the media. Since we value the voices in our community, we encourage those members to engage back either through their personal accounts, or by creating a social media presence for groups within our district— as long as they follow our policies and guidelines. *(See pages 6-8 for these.)*

Fonda-Fultonville's goal and primary official social media presences are:

The goal for Fonda-Fultonville on social media is to share news about what goes on in our district, and to create a dialogue with our fellow community members. We encourage students, parents and the rest of the community to post comments, ask questions and share their stories with us on our accounts. We believe that what makes our great district run are the people behind it, and also the people we serve. The voice of the community is therefore a large part of how we engage on social media.

Main district accounts:

www.facebook.com/FFCSD

www.twitter.com/FFCSBraves

www.twitter.com/FFCSAthletics

www.youtube.com/FFCSDBraves

Branding and District Social Media Accounts

All of Fonda-Fultonville's top-level profiles use the same or similar treatment of the district logo to communicate to fans, followers and viewers that the content found in these locations is official information.

In addition to the sites mentioned above, some of Fonda-Fultonville's departments and programs have launched official social media presences. These sites should be similarly branded to district-level social media pages in order to communicate that the information they are presenting is official and reliable. Please do not use the district's branding without first getting permission from the District Office.

To obtain a logo that can be used or adapted to your individual district group, please contact the Communications Office at communications@ffcsd.org or (518) 853-4415 ext. 4203 for assistance.

How Fonda-Fultonville Defines Social Media & Use

Social Media: Includes all methods of interaction online in all forms of user-generated and distributed content, including but not limited to, blogs, social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, etc.) and wikis.

Professional Use: Refers to using social media to advance a program or function of the Fonda-Fultonville Central School District as part of an employee's job responsibilities.

Personal Use: Refers to employees using social media to advance themselves personally, although this may include some work-related activities such as networking or promoting a Fonda-Fultonville program or service.

Important Policies

Social media usage in Fonda-Fultonville is governed by the same policies governing use for all other electronic communications or technology. Read the policies below before engaging in any social media use or campaign for any district purpose or as part of your official duties at Fonda-Fultonville. If you use social media for personal purposes, remember that even if you aren't operating social media on district time or even for district purposes, you represent the district as an employee, student or organization.

Fonda-Fultonville's Policy on Staff Use of Computerized Resources: Board of Education Policy #6470
http://www.fondafultonvilleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/6470.pdf

Fonda-Fultonville's Social Media Policy: Board of Education Policy #6400
http://www.fondafultonvilleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/6400.pdf

Requirements for setting up accounts:
Fonda-Fultonville Board of Education's Social Media Policy states that a student or employee requires prior approval from the Superintendent of Schools and the district's communications office before setting up any social media sites that are for educational purposes, that represent the school in any way or require student use of social media. For this approval, please use the application form on the next page and contact the district's communications office at communications@ffcsd.org or (518) 853-4415 ext. 4203 – they will coordinate with the superintendent on this matter. *Please note that this does not apply to external groups, like PTSA, but it is still good practice to notify your school if you set up an account that is associated to them in any form.*

Social Network Policies and Terms of Service
Please note that all social media sites have policies and terms of service relating to how they will or will not use your content, what is or isn't allowed on the social network, etc. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any of these policies before you launch your profiles/pages.

Questions/Help
If you have questions about social media best practices, or need guidance when problems or issues of concern arise, contact Fonda-Fultonville's Communications Office at communications@ffcsd.org or (518) 853-4415 ext. 4203. We are available to assist you with any social media concern, large or small.

Application for Social Media Use

If you would like to set up a social media account to represent your classroom, school club/group, a school event, or district sporting team, please use this application.

Please fill out and return this application to the district's Communications Office at communications@ffcsd.org, or in-person at the district office. You can also complete it online as a Google Form.

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

District E-mail Address: _____

Social Media Network: _____ *(Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.?)*

Account Name: _____ **Account Password:** _____

Purpose of the account:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Best Practices for Success in Social Media

When Posting:

Use good judgment – *We expect you to use good judgment in all situations*
- You must know and follow the district's Code of Conduct and Policy Manual.
- Think before you post! Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you have shared on your social network is public information. Don't post anything online you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing on the front page of a newspaper or on the CNN website.

Be respectful, responsible and ethical – *We expect you to uphold district standards online and offline*
- Always treat others in a respectful, positive and considerate manner.
- Even though you are approved to represent the school, unless you are specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the school as a spokesperson, you should state that the views expressed in your postings, etc. are your own. Stick with discussing school-related matters that are within your area of responsibility.
- Be open about your affiliation with the school and the role/position you hold.
- Do not engage in arguments or extensive debates with naysayers on your site.

Be a good listener
- Keep in mind that one of the biggest benefits of social media is that it gives others another way to talk to you, ask questions directly, and to share feedback.
- Be responsive to others when conversing online. Provide answers, thank people for their comments, and ask for further feedback, etc.
- Always be doing at least as much listening and responding as you do "talking."

Be active
- Social media presences require diligent care and feeding. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes every other day, and to post fresh content on a weekly basis, reconsider jumping into social media at this time.
- Your site is only as interesting as your last post—if that post is several months old, visitors will consider it mothballed.

Be a valued community member
- Don't just talk about your program or department— share the best information you find from other areas of the district, community or world from trusted sources. This will increase the value of your site and also ensure you are valued member of the community and are not just self-promoting.

Consider:

Confidential information – *We expect you to protect our staff and students' personal information.*

- Do not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential or not public. If it seems confidential, it probably is. Online "conversations" are never private. Do not use your birth date, address and cell phone number on any public website.
- To ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide. Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations.
- *NEVER* give out or transmit personal information of students, parents or employees.
- Don't take information you may receive through social networking (such as e-mail addresses, customer names or telephone numbers) and assume it's the most up-to-date or correct.
- Always respect the privacy of school community members.

Images
- Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the school.
- You may use photos and video (products, etc.) that are available on the school's website.
- **It is not acceptable to post pictures of students if the parent(s) have submitted a written request to opt-out** – please check with your school office for this information.
- Do not post pictures of others without their permission unless it is from a public event. There is a difference between posting a picture of someone with their family at home and posting a picture of them at a science fair or football game.

Other sites
- A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks involves passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. However, the school is ultimately responsible for any content that is shared. **Don't blindly repost a link without looking at the content first.**
- Pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer before clicking on unfamiliar links. They actually serve a purpose and protect you and the school.
- When using Twitter, Facebook and other tools, be sure to follow their terms and conditions.

And if you don't get it right…
- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make it clear what you've done to fix it.
- Apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.
- If it's a MAJOR mistake (e.g., exposing private information or reporting confidential information), please let someone know immediately so the school can take the proper steps to help minimize the impact it may have. If you don't know whom to contact, call the Communications Office at communications@ffcsd.org or (518) 853-4415 ext. 4203.

Tell Us About It!

Fonda-Fultonville has a broad audience of students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, sports fans and more, keeping in touch with us via social media. Let the district know what you are doing so we can help expand your reach by sharing your updates with these individuals, and also to make sure we are aware of the news and developments you are sharing with your audiences.

Contact the Communications Office at communications@ffcsd.org or (518) 853-4415 ext. 4203.

*Note:
Fonda-Fultonville Board of Education's Social Media Policy states that a student or employee requires prior approval from the Superintendent of Schools and the district Communications Office before setting up any social media sites that are for educational purposes, represent the school in any way or require student use of social media. For this approval, please use the application form on the next page and contact the district's communications office at communications@ffcsd.org or (518) 853-4415 ext. 4203 – they will coordinate with the superintendent on this matter.

Getting Started

1. **Secure the appropriate approval.**
   If you wish to create a social media page/profile for your department, class, or student group, secure approval from the communications office. ***Please see page 7.***

2. **Define your goals.**
   Before jumping into social media, spend time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tool or tools, create relevant content and understand the best way to reach your target audience.

3. **Identify a coordinator.**
   Determine who will be the primary person responsible for updating and monitoring your site or profile. Ensure the coordinator has the time to check your sites at least once every couple of days. This does not need to take up a significant amount of time, but successful social media sites are updated frequently, enable easy engagement with viewers and adjust in response to timely events and problems.

4. **Create a strategy.**
   The more work you do on the front end, the more likely you are to create a successful social media presence. Define what you hope to accomplish, with whom you wish to engage and what content you wish to share. Then begin exploring social media tools. **Use the worksheet provided in this handbook to create your social media strategy.**

5. **Listen.**
   All social media platforms have their own standards, styles and expectations. By becoming a consumer of social media before you become a producer, you will learn how these communities work, what content is of most interest, what other organizations are saying about your topic, etc. Spending a good amount of time on this step will help you better plan what contributions your voice can have.

6. **Choose your tool.**
   After listening, you may find the short, 140-character bursts of Twitter, or the single photo or short video approach of Instagram are a good fit for your goals. Don't try to do it all at once – choose a tool that best meets your goals and focus on building there

7. **Name yourself.**
   Create a profile name that clearly and concisely identified your program and its district affiliation. Do not simply identify yourself as Fonda-Fultonville, as that implies you are speaking for the entire district. Try to avoid dates or years in profile names, you want the account to stand the test of time.

8. **Experiment.**
   Build out your Twitter stream, Instagram feed, Facebook page or whatever you choose

and spend time populating it for several weeks, sharing it with a small group who can provide comments. Have the site up and running well before you plan to launch it so you can become comfortable maintaining it and ensure that the plan you set in place works appropriately.

9. **Launch.**
    You're ready to communicate! Notify the district's Communications Office to get suggestions on how to reach potential audiences and let them know you are on social media. Or, if you're using it for a classroom project/assignment, e-mail a link to the parents of the students in the class, for example.

10. **Adjust.**
    Once your site is up and running, you will find some content is popular, some is ignored and some is too in-depth. All social media tools come with tracking tools, so you can see which posts are viewed and shared most, with generate comments, etc. Be prepared to re-align your strategy in response to who is viewing your site and how they are doing so.

    Tools of Note for Popular Networks:
    - SumAll *(sumall.com)*
    - Facebook Insights is included in the admin portal of your page.
    - Twitter Analytics *(analytics.twitter.com)* & Advanced Search *(twitter.com/search-advanced)*
    - Twittercounter *(twittercounter.com)*
    - Buffer *(buffer.com)*

Developing a Strategy for Social Media Use

Use this worksheet to guide you in developing you social media strategy.

1. **Team:** Identify the person or persons who will have primary responsibility for populating, maintaining and monitoring your site. Ensure they have the time and enthusiasm to devote to this project. *List the team members.*

2. **Primary Goals:** Are you trying to communicate about a project, generally promote your department or group, communicate with parents or alumni? *Define your goal for your social media presence.*

3. **Measuring Success:** Determine how you will measure the success, or lack of success, of your site/profile. Increase in school event attendance? Better communication with students? A new network of community interaction? *List how you plan to measure the success of your efforts and the tools you'll use to track that success.*

4. **Audiences:** Identifying your audiences will help you tailor your content and also choose the right networks. *List your primary audiences.*

5. **Current Conversation:** This is when the listening begins. Survey the social media landscape for what is already being said about your organization or topic. What are people saying? Who is saying it? *List the topics, people and sites that are leading the conversations that are relevant to you.*

6. **Content:** Identify the content you have to share. Is it primarily news updates, conversation or networking information? Photographs? Video? *List the content you will be sharing.*

7. **Name and Design:** *Identify a simple and descriptive name for your profile that clearly identifies your affiliation with the district.* Please contact the Communications Office for assistance in what graphics to use for your social media accounts.

8. **Evaluation:** Set a timeline for when you will evaluate your site's success, using the goals and measures you identified above. At that time, be prepared to rethink your content. Ongoing evaluation should be part of your strategy. *Define your timeline.*

A Note on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube

Twitter and Instagram

If you're uneasy about any time commitments with social media or know you'll only have a limited amount of time to devote to generating content for your accounts we suggest you consider Twitter or Instagram first. These platforms focus on short-form content—140 characters, pictures or one 15-second video—and will be easier to update.

Facebook and YouTube

Unlike Twitter and Instagram, which are focused on short-form content and take less time to update, Facebook and YouTube are much more friendly for institution-wide communications and it can take time to develop content for these platforms.

For this reason, we request that you put careful consideration into whether or not you set up a Facebook or YouTube account and think about whether you will have enough content to fill a Facebook page or YouTube channel. If not, reach out to Fonda-Fultonville's Communications Office staff and ask them to put updates on the district-wide Facebook page and any videos on the district's YouTube account.