

Section: 2000 - Faculty and Staff

Title : Social Networking

Number: 2300

Status: Active

Adopted: March 2020

Social Media Policies Employee/Student Boundaries

Social Media:

Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or any content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking, professional networking, web bulletin board, chat room, wikis, social photo or video sharing social news, or collaboration sites.

The goal of this policy is to foster the appropriate use of social media between Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy (TJCA) staff and students. It is not the intent of the policy to interfere with communication between individuals—nor is it the intent of the guidelines to deny access to recognized student organizations that wish to announce upcoming events that may be of interest to members of the school or community.

Overall Social Media Use:

TJCA faculty and staff are expected to behave honorably in both real and virtual (online) spaces. Activities which are inappropriate, unethical, illegal, or which cause undue discomfort for students, fellow employees, parents, or other members of the school community should be judiciously avoided in physical space, written communications, as well as cyberspace. Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration that you should use in face-to-face interactions.

"Practice What You Preach"

As educators, we continually encourage students to engage in proper online behavior; therefore, all members of the TJCA adult community are expected to model that behavior. In all postings on all social networking sites, TJCA employees represent the School, and should use appropriate discretion in their choice of language, images and content posted on their personal sites, understanding that online content can never be understood as "private." Further, all employees should keep in mind that as soon as employees have their positions or employment listed on a social networking site, they are seen as representatives of TJCA and the lines between public, private and professional become blurred — without question, their content is now associated with TJCA. TJCA will not tolerate inflammatory communication of any kind based on race, color,

religion, sex, handicap, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, country of ancestral origin, or any other category protected by law.

Personal Social Media Use:

Friending: Terminology describing the linking of online profiles varies from site to site. “Friending” is used here as a generic term to include following, subscribing, adding as a contact, or any other term meaning establishing an online relationship between two people that makes available otherwise restricted content, and relates to all social media channels including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat.

- ***Current Students:*** (1) Employees should not invite current TJCA students to join their personal social networking sites and (2) employees should not accept inbound invitations from current students. At all times, employees must maintain appropriate boundaries with students, and adhere to the School’s “Guidelines for Conduct” (see policy 2180) whether those interactions by in person or online.
- ***Current Parents:*** Employees are discouraged from friending, or accepting friend requests from, parents of current students.
- ***Alumni/Formal Students:*** Employees are encouraged to use professional discretion when friending, or accepting friend requests from, alumni or former students who are 18 years of age and older, recognizing that many alumni and/or former students have online connections with current students (including younger siblings and underclassmen friends), and that information shared to recent alumni is likely to be seen by current students as well. Know your privacy settings.

Note: There may be instances when a school employee has a relationship to, or strong connection with, a current student and/or his or her family such as from a familial connection or non-school affiliation. In these instances, employees should exercise extreme discretion and good judgment in being included in posts and/or social networking sites with any such current student.

Professional Use:

Social networking sites may be established for educational purposes, though TJCA staff members must operate with the same standards of professional conduct that characterize their work in all other domains. Additionally, the following protocols must be followed:

1. Any employee who wishes to create a social media account on behalf of TJCA for a team, group, academic department or otherwise, must first contact the IT Director. Additional approval will be sought from the Public Relations Committee if deemed necessary. Note: If a social media account incorporates the words “Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy”, “TJCA” or similar references and/or uses a TJCA logo, it is considered to be “on behalf of TJCA” and must follow proper approval protocols. Once the IT Director approves an account, it is considered “school-sanctioned.” The School

retains absolute discretion regarding the continued existence of any school-sanctioned social media account.

2. Account information, including username, password and email on file, for all school-sanctioned social media sites must be kept on record with the IT Director. Should the need arise, the School reserves the right to access the account.
3. All school-sanctioned accounts should incorporate school branding guidelines (font, colors, logo use). Please contact the IT Director for specific details.
4. Employees must not post anything that is defamatory or disparaging of the School or about any student, employee, donor or other member of the school community (current or former). Avoid using statements that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of any category protected by law.
5. Employees must ensure that they have obtained proper permissions for any research material, images or ideas posted.
6. Employees should not disclose confidential information about the School or personal information about a student or member of the school community.

Additional Information:

- Like with all policies, there may be exceptions based on the need to communicate with students and parents. These will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the IT Director to discuss further.
- All employees should feel free to contact the IT Director to review the privacy setting options available to them on all personal networking sites to set up their accounts in a way that will best protect their personal information.

Concerted Activity Is Protected:

TJCA recognizes that social media can be a forum for employees to communicate about the terms and conditions of work, including the conduct of administrators, staff and other employees. TJCA encourages all employees to raise any such concerns to the appropriate School administrator, department head, or human resources person, but also does not discourage other communications about such matters, including on social media. Nothing in the above policy is intended to restrict an employee's right to engage in legally protected concerted activity. If you do engage in such concerted activity while using social media, such activity will not be a violation of this policy, and no detrimental employment action will be taken against you or others based on such protected concerted activity.