

Battle River School Division  
Every Student, Every Day, A Success



# Social Media

## Guidelines for Schools / Departments



For more information please contact:  
BRSD Communications Department  
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Battle River School Division recognizes that Social Media is an effective means of communication that can be leveraged to increase communication between parents, staff and stakeholders. The Division is committed to supporting staff in developing best practices around this technology as it relates to instructional and professional development purposes.

However, social media also holds the possibility of unintended consequences. It is the responsibility of schools and staff to ensure that their online presence adheres to the Code of Professional Conduct and act in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession, regardless of the medium of communication.

Please refer to *Administrative Procedure 138 - Social Media*, for additional information.



# What is Social Media?



Social Media is a category of websites generally characterized as an interactive social community where all content is collaboratively generated by users of that site. Rather than a conversation solely between two people, social media conversations can occur between many people at any one time. New social media channels are being developed on a continuous basis. Current social media examples include:

- social networking sites including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram & Twitter
- video and photo sharing sites like Flickr and YouTube
- blogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by mainstream media outlets
- forums and discussion boards including comments or feedback sections of mainstream media websites
- wikis including Wikipedia

In both professional and institutional roles, employees need to follow the same behavioural standards online as they would in person. The same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, media and other stakeholders apply online as they do in reality.





## 1. Protect Confidential Information

Private information pertaining to school, staff and students must be respected at all times. Division confidentiality agreements, particularly FOIP, must be adhered to at all times.

## 2. Respect Copyright and Fair Use

Consider copyright and ownership right before posting information and media.

## 3. Do Not Endorse

Any social media accounts created for use by and for BRSD staff and students must not endorse a product, cause or political entity.

## 4. Read and Respect Terms of Service

Prior to creating a social media account for BRSD purposes, please read and adhere to the terms of service.

## 5. Be Aware of Liability

Remember that you are responsible for whatever content is posted on accounts. This can include copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous or obscene content (as defined by the courts).





The following procedures and those contained in Social Media AP 138 must be adhered to if posting on behalf of Battle River School Division or BRSD Schools (including departments, school councils, sports teams, clubs, etc.)

## **Step 1: Complete the Social Media Account Request Form**

Schools that have an established social media account, or have plans to create one, need to submit the Social Media Account Request form to the BRSD Director of Communications.

## **Step 2: Create an Account**

Social Media accounts that represent Battle River School Division, BRSD Schools (including departments, school councils, sports teams, clubs, etc.) must be administered by a staff member. All of these accounts must be approved upon completing the Social Media Account Request Form.

Accounts cannot be administered by students or parents, except for a School Council account which may be administered by a parent, as long as full access is also available to a staff member.





## ***Choosing a Name***

If creating a new account, include BRSD after the school name. If your school has an established account, add BRSD to your bio information. This helps to build the sense of community between schools within the division and allows for more effective searching of schools.

Naming Examples  
Facebook: {School Name BRSD}  
Twitter: {@school name BRSD}

## **Step 3: Develop a Purpose**

Before starting an account that represents BRSD, develop a plan for its use. Questions to consider:

- Who is it being developed for?
- What information needs to be communicated?
- Who will be keeping it up to date?

If you need assistance with this, please contact the Communications department.



## **Protect the Division's voice/views**

Posts on social media sites should protect and align with the Division's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste.

## **Think twice before posting**

Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what would happen if a post or picture became widely known and how that could reflect both on the person posting it and on the Division.

Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created/deleted, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, you shouldn't be posting it online.

If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact the Communications department.





## **Strive for accuracy**

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information first than to have to post a correction or retraction later, which affects your personal and professional reputation. Cite sources and link to your sources whenever possible. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.

## **Remember your audience**

Be aware that a presence in the social media world is available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, parents, colleagues, peers and past or present employers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

## **Use of photography/video**

Parental permission must be acquired if tagging photos that identify students. This needs to occur for each individual photo.

## **Keep content current**

Assign an administrator or employee who can regularly monitor postings and content. Aim for standard times for postings and updates. The recommended minimum frequency is twice a week. But be sure not to overload your updates, as followers will ignore you if you overload them with information.





## **Enable Controls on Your Account**

Many forms of social media allow the administrator to have some form of control over posts and comments that can be viewed by the public. Whenever possible, exercise this control. It is much better to filter than delete something after it has already been viewed.

## **Constantly Monitor Account Activities**

Be vigilant about what is being posted on your social media and what is being posted about your account. This is an important element of digital citizenship and helps schools be more aware of their digital footprint.