



TWITTER GUIDELINES

Twitter is one of many valuable communication tools that a school district could have at its disposal. Because electronic media is subject to rapid change, district policy may not always be current or comprehensive in dealing with issues that arise as electronic media evolve. The intent of this document is to provide guidelines that can evolve with the changing features of Twitter. These guidelines deal with the creation of school-wide Twitter pages.

ACCOUNT SET-UP

- A. Schools setting up a Twitter account must first notify the Office of Human Resources.
- B. The account must be set up by someone who has completed one hour of online professional development with the district.
- C. The account must be linked to a district email account, not a personal account nor an employee's email account with the district.
- D. A picture of the school or the school logo should be used as the profile picture for the account. Do not use pictures of students or staff as the profile picture.
- E. Pictures of students and staff are acceptable for use to create a unique background theme for the page. Make sure none of the children in the picture have a media denial form on file.
- F. The username for the school should be set up as the initials of the school with no spaces between the words if possible (e.g. @KEES, @WEMS). Capitalization should take precedence.
- G. *If the initials of the school are already taken, try using the name of the school (@KellyEdwardsES, or @WillistonElkoMS). Try using only names that the community will recognize.
- H. The password for the account must be shared with the Principal and the Human Resources Director to assist with managing the account. This is an accountability measure and of course, for assistance to you. **DO NOT SHARE THE PASSWORD WITH ANYONE BUT THE PRINCIPAL AND HR DIRECTOR.**



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MANAGING THE ACCOUNT

- A. The school's Twitter account may be used to post announcements, pictures or links relevant to the school. The account can also be used as an additional means of quickly communicating information during a crisis, but may only be used for this purpose with permission from district administration.
- B. The private messaging feature of the account should not be used to carry on conversations with members of the community.
- C. Proper grammar and spelling should be followed when possible when posting to Twitter. It is understood that the character limit on tweets often forces abbreviations this is unacceptable and the tweet should be minimized or sectioned into parts. *When space is not an issue, words should not be abbreviated.*
- D. You may accept friend request if you believe they are in good character and have the best intent for the school and district. You do not have to continue acceptance if there is abuse of language or posting of inappropriate pictures, etc. Therefore monitoring the Twitter account is critical.

DEALING WITH NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

- A. Twitter is a community in which discussion is completely open. There is no way to control the words of others, and once statements are made, they are virtually impossible to retract. In this respect, it is very much like traditional person-to-person communication.
- B. When negative statements are made by members of the community on Twitter, it is unwise to respond to them in a public way through the school's Twitter account. A public response can quickly lead to a public feud, which will garner much more attention than the initial negative comment. If the author of the statement is someone who can be contacted privately in person, by email or by phone (such as a parent or staff member), then the matter should be addressed privately.
- C. Blocking a negative commenter on Twitter is counterproductive. Doing so hides that person's comments from the school account managers, but not from anyone else. It is better to be able to monitor public feedback than to hide from it.



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D. Remaining positive and on-message with your posts is the best defense against critical or abusive Twitter users.

If ever there is a question or you are in doubt, contact the Office of Human Resources via office phone-803-266-8011. Thank you for your commitment to making communication widespread across the State of South Carolina and throughout Barnwell County.