

# Marion County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in March	<b>Social Media Policy</b>	<b>5.6061</b>	<b>06/17/24</b>
		Rescinds:	Issued:
		<b>5.6061</b>	<b>06/22/20</b>

## OVERVIEW

### Purpose and Scope

Marion County Board of Education has determined that social media is a tool that can be used to further our mission and goals. Social media can provide a cost-effective method of engaging our communities in discussion, foster positive relationships with our clients, and represent Marion County Board of Education in these emerging electronic communications.

These guidelines apply to employees, volunteers, or contractors who create or contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media and identify themselves as employees of Marion County Board of Education or comment on the organization.

While all Marion County Board of Education employees are welcome to participate in social media, we expect everyone who participates in online commentary to understand and to follow these simple but important guidelines. The goal is to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects our reputation and follows the letter and spirit of the law. You are legally responsible for your commentary, even on a password protected social media site. You can be held personally liable for commentary deemed to be legally defamatory, proprietary or libelous, whether pertaining to Marion County Board of Education, its employees, other individuals, or any other organization.

### General Guidelines

Public interaction and communication are encouraged about the content posted on social media accounts. However, this does not imply that the Marion County Department of Education (MCDOE) agrees with or accepts the content, opinions, or views expressed within any public comment. While social media accounts provide an open forum, it is expected that conversations will be courteous. Please remember you are fully responsible for the content of your comments. MCDOE does not discriminate against any views but does reserve the right to hide or delete comments on its social media sites. MCBOE may take action with comments that are:

1. Abusive, violent, obscene, profane, hateful or racist.
2. Threatening, harassing, or sexually explicit.
3. Deemed inappropriate or offensive by staff.
4. Suggestive or encouraging of illegal activity.

5. Libel, slander, or personal attacks of any kind, Inducing the use of offensive terms that target specific individuals or groups.
6. Commercial advertising.
7. Links to third-party websites.

To protect your privacy, please do not include any personal information in your comment that could be used to identify you.

Please be respectful of others. Do not abuse your access to MCDOE social media pages. Repeat violators of these guidelines risk being blocked from commenting on all MCDOE social media pages.

### **Relevant Technologies**

This policy includes, but is not limited to following specific technologies:

- Personal blogs
- LinkedIn®
- Twitter®
- Facebook®
- Facebook Messenger®
- Google+®
- Instagram®
- Snapchat®
- TikTok®
- Personal Websites
- Blogs

### **Procedures**

1. Keep your work-related and personal social media accounts separate. Do not post work-related information through your personal account, or the reverse. You may, however, share Marion County Board of Education social media posts from your personal account.
2. Be transparent and state that you work at Marion County Board of Education. Your honesty will be noted in the social media environment. If you are writing about Marion County Board of Education, use your real name, identify that you work for Marion County Board of Education, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in what you are discussing, be the first to say so.
3. Never represent yourself or Marion County Board of Education in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true, accurate, and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.
4. Post meaningful, respectful comments—no spam and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive. Use common sense and common courtesy in all communication.

5. Protect sensitive or personal information. Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate Marion County Board of Education's privacy, confidentiality, and legal guidelines for external communication. Never discuss clients of Marion County Board of Education.
6. Limit your comments to your area of expertise and feel free to provide unique, individual perspectives on non-confidential activities at Marion County Board of Education.
7. If you find yourself disagreeing with others' opinions, keep your response appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Feel free to ask the Director of Human Resources for advice and/or to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on Marion County Board of Education.
8. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties Marion County Board of Education may be in litigation with.
9. Never participate in social media when the topic being discussed may be considered a crisis situation. Even anonymous comments may be traced back to your or Marion County Board of Education's IP address. Refer all social media activity around crisis topics to your Manager and/or the Director of Human Resources.
10. Always protect yourself, your privacy, and Marion County Board of Education's confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Social media users should always be aware that these types of communications are considered public records.
11. Personal use of social media is the right of every employee using their own equipment and on their own time. They are expected to never post or create anything that would be potentially embarrassing to Marion County Board of Education] or considered offensive. It should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of Marion County Board of Education.
12. Never post videos or pictures without prior authorization of students or employees of the Marion County Board of Education.

NOTE: Mainstream media inquiries must be referred to the Director of Schools or designated representative.

## **TENNESSEE CODE OF ETHICS**

- (1) An educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. An educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards; and
- (2) An educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. **49-5-1002**

## **DISCIPLINE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE**

Personnel should be aware of potential penalties for noncompliance with organization policy, which may include suspension of certain security privileges, suspension of employment, or termination. Issues with adherence to this policy will be addressed utilizing the organization's approach to disciplinary action and with the assistance of the Director of Human Resources.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT SIGN-OFF**

All organization employees, volunteers, or others utilizing the information systems of Marion County Board of Education must sign an acknowledgment of this policy annually. This is intended to ensure that every employee is aware of the current security practices and ethical responsibilities contained in this policy.

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### **Cross References:**

Board-Community Relations 1.500

News Releases, News Conferences & Interviews 1.503

Advertising & Distribution of Materials in Schools 1.806