Creating a Social Media Policy

For questions and assistance in creating your social media policy, contact:

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Social Media Popularity

- Facebook:
  - 864 million daily active users
  - 703 million mobile daily active users
Social Media Popularity

- Twitter:

  - 284 million monthly active users
  - 500 million tweets sent per day
  - 5,787 per second
  - 80% of active Twitter users are on mobile
Social Media Popularity

- Instagram:
  - 60 million photos per day shared
  - 1.6 billion likes daily
Social Media Popularity

- Snapchat:
  - 100 million active users
  - 400 million snaps per day
  - 71% of Snapchat users are under 25
Social Media Popularity

- **Yik Yak:**
  - Anonymous posting app (no login required)
  - Localized (anyone within 1.5 mile radius can read)
  - Extremely popular with High School students
Social Media & Teens

- 95% of teens 12-17 use the Internet
- 80% of online teens use social media
- 77% use Facebook
- 24% use Twitter
- Growth in visual platforms (Instagram, Snapchat)
Social Media & Teens

- Issues:
- Validation
- Cyberbullying

New home of cyberbullying? Yik Yak gossip app takes off in high schools

The selfie syndrome: Why teens use social media for validation and how parents can counteract it

Carolyn Savage

Oct. 15, 2013 at 8:21 AM ET
Social Media & Teens

• Issues:

• Future Impact

Many colleges turn to social media to help screen applicants

Posted 6:44 PM, November 21, 2014, by Daniela Perallon, Updated at 09:35PM, November 21, 2014

More employers using social media to screen applicants

Posted: June 25, 2014 5:00 a.m.
Social Media & HS Athletes

- Given the high social media use by teens & the popularity of sports, HS athletes are under microscope with social media:
  - Especially relevant as recruiting industry has grown exponentially
  - Ease for people to access content (media, fans, parents)
  - “Tattling/Reporting”
Social Media & HS Athletes

- Given their affiliation with the school, athletes social media use reflects the High School, District, and Community

- One of the big challenges for all organizations

- How to manage social media use by employees/students?

- Very difficult to regulate due to ease of transmission
High school wrestlers suspended from state tourney for 'lynching' photo
What some are calling a racist photograph apparently made in jest by high school athletes is no laughing matter to New Jersey school officials.

Utah high school football coach suspends entire team for cyberbullying incident
POSTED 1:11 PM, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013, BY CNN WIRE, UPDATED AT 07:12PM, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013
**Count 1:** That his and his parents' complaints and letters to school officials, and his posts on Twitter, were protected by the First Amendment and that his "ill treatment and ultimate removal" from the varsity team "was a direct retaliation against him for the Constitutionally protected activity...". Because of this, Johanson "suffered humiliation and embarrassment, a loss of liberty, and the lost opportunities for both personal enrichment and potential scholarships."
Social Media Policies

- One way that organizations have attempted to manage social media use is through policy.
- This is consistent with other organizational expectations.
- Very important – provides guidelines and sets boundaries.
What goes into a Policy?

- Policy should function as a “roadmap”
- Where do you want student-athletes to go with social media?
What goes into a Policy?

• As much as we might wish for student-athletes to stop using social media, that’s just not a reality in the world we live in.
Step #1

- Background
- Brief paragraph that discusses the emergence of social media
- Benefits/risk/responsibility that come with using social media
- Representative of school/community
- No expectation of privacy
Step #1

- This may be an appropriate place to discuss incidents that have affected other student-athletes
- Stress that one post can take away a lifetime of work
Step #2

- Outline what is meant by “social media”
- Very important as perceptions exist that:
  - Doesn’t mean apps
  - Doesn’t cover mobile usage
  - Make sure talking about relevant platforms
Step #3

- Outline how social media “can be” used:
  - Build a brand/identity
  - Promote School/Team
  - Example hashtags
  - Network/Connection
Step #4

- Outline things to avoid/prohibitions:

- Hateful messages based on protected characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation)

- Sexually explicit material (e.g. sexting – Snapchat is big platform)

- Cyberbullying

- Criticism of coaches
Step #4

- Trash-talking with other athletes/schools
- Within reason, avoid ambiguous terms “inappropriate”
- Better to list specifics, as well as a disclaimer
- “Including but not limited to”
- Right reservation
Step #5

- Consequences:
  - Progressive Discipline is generally best option
  - Include “up to and including” based on severity of incident
  - Restriction of social media
  - Can be touchy legal subject
  - Removal from team may be better option

You are free to make whatever choice you want, but you are not free from the consequences of the choice.
Step #5

- Consequences:
- Important to emphasize that student can explain his/her version
- Align with School/District Policy

You are free to make whatever choice you want, but you are not free from the consequences of the choice.
Step #6

- Signature (Manual)
- Include statement that signature indicates that policy has been read and understood
- Provides documentation
- Consider parent/guardian signature as well
Also Important...

- Social Media is always changing
- Policy should be reviewed annually and revised as needed
- Try and keep to 2 pages
- Should complement education
“We don’t have a choice on whether we DO social media, the question is how well we DO it.”

- Erik Qualman