

NJEA Members:

Tips for Twitter & Facebook

1. Make sure you read and follow your district's social media policy (if your district has one).
2. Don't use your full name as your user name; giving away personal information – even your full name – online can be dangerous. Make sure to keep your cell phone number and home email private – you can check this under "Privacy Settings" under "Contact Information."
3. Do not affiliate your social media accounts with your work email address. People can search for you by your email address.
4. Do not use the same password for multiple accounts. For example, do not use the same password for your Facebook, Twitter, and email accounts. If your account is hacked the perpetrator can easily access all your other accounts.
5. Consider carefully how what you post could be interpreted. Humor, especially sarcasm, is extremely difficult to convey.
6. Never post information about your job online, especially about students. People have lost their jobs for things they have posted. Never post anything you mean to be funny about your boss or students.
7. Never post during work hours or using work materials, such as a computer. Even if you use your own personal laptop or smartphone at work, you could have a problem, particularly if you are posting when you are supposed to be performing your duties. Remember, Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites have time and date stamps on comments so people can see when you posted something.
8. Even if you are not "friends" or "following" a manager or co-workers, people can find your information online and so-called friends may share it with your boss by printing it out, taking a screenshot, or showing them the information on a smartphone.
9. Be careful with abbreviations. Twitter mandates 140 characters; many times you have to shorten or abbreviate your message. Make sure you re-read your post carefully before you submit it.
10. Do not share where you are with applications such as Foursquare. You never know who is accessing your information, or why. Be safe and only post your location after the fact.
11. Always exercise good judgment when posting anywhere online. Don't let emotion overwhelm common sense. Be careful when using capital letters as this is considered to be shouting.

12. Be judicious in posting photos online, especially if they are not something you would want to be shown at a school board meeting. User policies can vary – you may be allowing the company the right to use them any way they would like. Never post photos of yourself holding alcoholic beverages or wearing provocative clothing.

13. Monitor photos in which you are “tagged.” When someone uploads a picture of you and tags it with your name it can be viewed unless you have properly set your privacy settings, which is at least a seven-step process. In addition, be careful of photos in which others are behaving in a risqué manner as you will be seen as guilty by association.

14. Do not “friend” or “follow” students or their parents. If you are using social media for education-related activities, make sure to have it approved in writing by your supervisor and create a different account; do not use your personal account.

As educators, we are held to higher standards than the rest of the working world. It's a responsibility that we take very seriously. Be safe online and never post anything you wouldn't want read out loud at a school board meeting.

Source: New Jersey Education Association website