



Social Media Policy

While recognizing the benefits of these media outlets for opportunities for communication, this policy sets forth the principles that First State Montessori Academy staff are expected to follow when using social media.

It is crucial that students, parents, and the public have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly to protect the confidentiality of students and staff.

Scope:

This policy applies to all First State Montessori Academy employees, board members, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school, volunteers, and other individuals who work for or provide a service on behalf of the school. These individuals will collectively be referred to as "staff members" in this policy.

This policy applies to personal webspace, such as social networking sites (ex. Facebook), blogs, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias (ex. Wikipedia), social bookmarking sites (ex. del.icio.us), content sharing sites (ex. youtube), microblogs (ex. twitter). The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set forth in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the social media for official school purposes.

Confidential information includes but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
- School business or corporate records containing organizationally or publicly sensitive information
- Politically sensitive information

Staff members should be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment, and copyright may apply to information posted on social media.

General Guidelines:

- 1a. You must not discuss personal information about students, staff, or other professionals you interact with as part of your job on social media.
- 1b. You may not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, colleagues, or other professionals.
- 1c. You must not engage in activities involving social media that might bring FSMA into disrepute.
- 1d. You must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in any position where there is a conflict between your work for FSMA and your personal interests.

Personal Use of Social Media:

- 2a. Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any FSMA student, unless the student is a family member. Staff members must decline any “friend requests” from students in their personal social media accounts.
- 2b. FSMA does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with family members/close friends via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor passed on to others who may use it in such a way.
- 2c. Upon leaving FSMA, staff members must not contact FSMA students by means of personal social media.
- 2d. Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues, and school information must not be discussed on their personal webpage.
- 2e. Photographs, videos or any other types of images of students or images of staff wearing FSMA identifiable clothing, outside of school events, should not be published on personal webpage. Employees are expected to use their professional judgment on these types of postings.
- 2f. Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia for personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as FSMA’s IP address and therefore appear as if it comes from FSMA.
- 2g. FSMA does not expect staff to use social media for personal use during the work day. Staff members are expected to utilize their contracted hours of work for their professional duties.

Using Social Media on Behalf of FSMA:

3a. Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with students, parents and other groups interested in the life of the school.

3b. Staff must not create sites/posts which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage.

3c. FSMA logo or brand must not be used on any personal webspace or social media.

3d. Staff members must, at all times, act in the best interest of children when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

Monitoring of Internet Use:

4a. FSMA monitors usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorization from users.

4b. Users of FSMA email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive using the school system.

Creating Social Media Sites on behalf of FSMA:

5a. Staff members participating in social media for work purposes are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behavior as when using other media or giving public presentations on behalf of FSMA.

5b. Prior to creating a site, careful consideration must be given to the purpose for using social media and approval must be sought from the administration.

Breaches of the Policy:

Any breach in this policy may result in disciplinary action. In addition, any breach in confidentiality, defamation, or damage to the reputation of FSMA, or any illegal acts that render FSMA liable to a 3rd party may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.