

SSBA Executive Guidelines for Social Media

When using social media, Executive members will exercise good judgment, respect copyrights, protect confidential information, consider the audience and engage appropriately. While members' views are their own, they are encouraged to align messaging with the strategic goals of the Association and must consider conduct and conflict-of-interest implications in all political, personal or other social media use.

See the guidelines document attached for more information.



APPENDIX A SSBA Executive Social Media Guidelines

Background

These guidelines support Policy 6.0 – 5.5 Executive Member Code of Conduct and refers to the Saskatchewan School Boards Association’s (SSBA) online social media tools used to produce, post and interact with, using text, images, video, and audio. For the purposes of this policy, social media refers to all public use sites.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to set direction for SSBA Executive to participate in social media. Executive members are expected to use good judgement, just as they would if they were offline and dealing with members and the public. The guidelines are designed to encourage appropriate and effective use of all platforms and provide tips to exercise personal responsibility online and to make sure that social media users connected to the Association are making good decisions that reflect positively on the SSBA.

Use of Social Media

The SSBA supports the use of social media for educational and communication purposes. Social media is intended to be a platform where your audience feels comfortable sharing and connecting.

Five Guidelines of Social Media:

1. Exercise Good Judgement

- Take responsibility for what you write while exercising good judgement and common sense.
- Adhere to the SSBA’s organizational values and policies. Think twice before hitting “send” and consider how the comment will reflect on the organization.
- Spirited debates and conversations are acceptable as long as you are respecting others’ opinions and keeping the association’s goals for communication in mind.
- There may be some circumstances where an official statement is needed. If you spot a potential issue, ensure it is brought forward in a timely manner to the SSBA Communications staff so a proper response can be drafted and communicated quickly.

2. Consider Your Audience

- Think carefully about who you are targeting with your message – who will see it?
- Think twice before hitting “send” and consider how the comment will reflect on the organization.
- Make it part of your strategy to ensure you aren’t alienating any groups or stakeholders.

3. Respect Copyrights

- Always ensure that people are given proper credit for their work.
- Make sure you have the right to use something before you publish it. This includes images, quotes text etc. If you are using an image of an individual make sure they are aware.
- Respect copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity and other third-party rights

4. Protect Confidential and Proprietary Information

- Do not post private or confidential information about fellow trustees, employees or constituents. Do not discuss or post situations involving named, pictured or otherwise identifiable individuals without their permission. Personal information includes name, email, address, username (if it has the individual's name in it) etc.
- Do not post anything that you would not present in a public forum.

5. Add Value

- Social media pays off when you add value for your audience. Having a reason to communicate is important.
- Ensure the information you provide is accurate and worthwhile information that adds perspective.

Social Media Tips

- An active voice is better than a passive voice.
- Make it a goal to respond to all communications in a timely manner – within 24 hours if possible. Provide information when it counts - should you decide to engage in social media, know that monitoring and responding in a timely way are crucial. Social media participants expect timely responses to requests and expect co-participants to monitor social media properties frequently and regularly.
- If you feel something is spam or inappropriate for the audience, you have the right to remove it.
- Remember what is published online remains there forever
- You don't need to respond to every criticism. Pick your battles and be considerate! Refer questions to the proper channels – you may not have all the answers, and that's OK. Just have the proper channel, link, or contact information to direct them to.
- Give credit where credit is due - be authentic. Write as an extension of your own voice. If your voice differs from that of the Association you should clearly state that "the following views expressed are my own".
- When in doubt, do not post – like staff, elected officials have an obligation to ensure their posts are accurate and not misleading, and that they do not reveal confidential information.

Social media needs maintenance. If you start it, commit to it - be dynamic: update news feeds, post developments, upload new pictures. Social media participants are savvy; if your online property appears static, it is likely to quickly fall into disuse.

Sources: Adapted from - Brian Solis, *Putting the Public Back in Public Relations*, City of Guelph, Ontario and SARM Social Media Policy