

# #ABCconduct

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Educators have a visible place in their communities. The choices they make, even when well-intended, can affect their families, jobs, schools and profession. The Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Education Association and Ohio Federation of Teachers offer this series of tip sheets supported by BASA, OASSA and OAESA on how to recognize situations which can get good educators in trouble.

Most educators carry smart phones that give them photo, video and texting opportunities and the instant ability to post, like or snap. But these social media opportunities can blur the line between work and personal life.

## Be smarter than your smart phone

**Tip 1:** Remember, the *Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators* applies all day, every day, even to your personal social media accounts. If someone would have a problem with your planned post, it could mean a problem for you.

**Tip 2:** Privacy settings don't guarantee privacy, but using maximum settings may lower your risk. If you use social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, have two accounts for each:

**Professional account** – Post content only for students, parents, administrators and the school community. No party pictures or pet stories here.

**Personal account** – Post content only for friends and family, and use maximum privacy settings that block your posts from students, parents and the school community. Keep in mind that someone still could print, copy or take a screenshot of your post.

**Tip 3:** Remember, if a comment or photo is inappropriate in the school or classroom, it's inappropriate on social media.



## TODAY'S SMART EDUCATORS...

### Recognize every electronic communication is a record

If you wouldn't want your school, family or community to know about it, should you really post it?

### Keep their profiles PG rated

Don't post content showing alcohol, drugs, questionable behavior or associations with controversial groups.

### Know there is no such thing as truly "private"

Even on personal accounts with high privacy settings, people can print, copy or take a screenshot of your post.

### Understand their districts' social media policies

Ohio's teacher unions, educator associations and the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Professional Conduct also offer tips on best social media policies.

### Monitor their online presence

Photos from your 2011 college spring break or last week's party may embarrass you today. If a friend tagged you yesterday in a compromising photo, remove the tag and ask your friend to take down the photo.

### Crank their privacy settings high

Never friend, follow or add students, parents and professional contacts on your personal accounts. Consider making a rule that students can't ask to follow, friend or add you.

### Never vent their frustrations online

Avoid airing gripes about your job, colleagues or students. Never share protected, identifiable information like student grades, health conditions or full names.



## DO's & DON'Ts

—with—  
*Crystal Clear*

- 👍 **DO** consider every electronic communication a record.
- 👍 **DO** keep confidential information offline.
- 👍 **DO** know how to use social media privacy settings and their limitations.
- 👍 **DO** expect to be accountable for what you post.
- 👍 **DO** consider your tone.

- 👎 **DON'T** post inappropriate activities, images or words.
- 👎 **DON'T** bad mouth students, colleagues, your boss, parents or the community.
- 👎 **DON'T** follow, friend or add students.
- 👎 **DON'T** post anything if you have the slightest doubt about it.
- 👎 **DON'T** use "reply all" unless you really mean all.

## Share or DELETE

Teacher's personal Facebook post:  
Found out I'm teaching sixth grade  
next year. I hate that age group!

### Delete:

Parents, students and  
community members can  
see this statement, even on a  
personal page.

A principal made a racial slur  
online nine years ago while a  
college student.

### Delete:

Students, parents and co-  
workers may be able to  
find posts from years ago.  
Remember, review your  
online history; monitor your  
online presence.

11 p.m. Facebook message from  
student to teacher: Ugh. My  
parents are crazy and no one  
understands me.

### Delete:

Be sure not to counsel  
a student or converse  
inappropriately off hours.  
This teacher should forward  
the message and their  
concerns to school staff  
who can help.

A teacher posts on a Facebook  
page homework, class news  
and links to websites that  
extend classroom learning.

### SHARE:

New ways to support  
students are always  
positive. Make sure the  
links for students are age  
appropriate and meet  
school content standards.

A school administrator follows a  
risqué Twitter profile.

### Delete:

Anything you follow or like,  
even using your own device  
on your own time, becomes  
public business.