




TITLE: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR AGENCY BUSINESS

APPLIES TO: ALL OSPI EMPLOYEES

LAWS/WACS: 42.52 RCW Ethics in Public Services Act; 42.56 RCW Public Records Act; WAC 292-110-010 Use of State Resources Rule; OSPI Computer System Acceptable Use Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2014

APPROVAL: 

Randy I. Dorn,
State Superintendent

PURPOSE

Social media tools are a powerful method of communication and are used by millions of individuals and groups to share information and connect with others. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) uses social media tools and channels when appropriate to enhance communication and engagement with customers, partners, stakeholders, employers, employees and others to support the agency's strategic goals.

This policy describes how the agency uses social media and gives OSPI employees direction and guidelines for proper use of social media while at work and outside the workplace.

This policy is applicable to all OSPI employees.

DEFINITION

Social Media encompasses various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation. There are numerous forms of social media, such as blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, podcasts, social networking, ideation, bookmarking, discussion boards, gamification, and virtual worlds. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Blogger, YouTube, Flickr, Delicious and Wikipedia.

OSPI-SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The OSPI Communications Office is responsible for establishing and supervising all social media accounts for the agency, although participation and suggestions for content are encouraged for all employees. [See *Social Media Planning Sheet*, below, to learn how to contribute content].

OSPI's social media accounts are considered agency tools. The Communications Office is responsible for establishing, monitoring and administering policies for appropriate conduct, content, security, and records retention on all social media accounts for the agency.

The posting and maintenance of content on OSPI-sponsored social media accounts is limited to social media representatives designated by the Communications Office.

Content posted to OSPI-sponsored social media accounts cannot contain:

- Vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language or personal attacks.
- Promotion or advertising of commercial services, entities or products.
- Confidential, proprietary or legally sensitive information about agency business and/or OSPI employees.
- Policy decisions or items of legal and fiscal significance not previously been released to the public.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO OSPI SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Employees are **strongly encouraged** to contribute content to OSPI's social media channels. There are two ways to notify the Communications Office you'd like share an item on social media.

- Option 1 (Recommended): Complete and submit the online *Social Media Planning Sheet*. This goes to the Communications Office and content is scheduled accordingly.
- Option 2: Email commteam@k12.wa.us with your request. It's still recommended that you use the *Social Media Planning Sheet* to craft your message.

PUBLIC RECORDS

A record is defined broadly to include electronic records, including email, and metadata. Any record that is prepared, owned, used or maintained by OSPI potentially relates to the conduct of government and is potentially disclosable.

STATE RESOURCES

OSPI employees must comply with existing state laws and regulations governing the use of state equipment and resources when using social media. OSPI may monitor the use of all state resources, including computer hardware, software, mobile devices, the network, paid work time, and the use and content of all OSPI-sponsored social media accounts and websites. Misuse of state resources may result in corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Employees are free to establish and maintain personal social media accounts outside of paid work time, using personal, non-state-owned equipment, devices, and resources. Content posted on personal social media sites should never be attributed to, or appear to be endorsed by or to have originated from, OSPI. Employees who choose to list their OSPI affiliation on a personal social media site must apply the same standards of professionalism as outlined in the state Ethics in Public Services Act.

Best Practices Are Recommended

Common sense and sound judgment are usually the best tools in avoiding problems. The following best practices are highly recommended for any OSPI employee who utilizes social media for personal use:

- **Be aware of your OSPI association.** If you identify yourself as an OSPI employee or have a public-facing position for which your OSPI association is known to the general public, ensure your profile and related content (even if it is of a personal and not an official nature) is consistent with how you wish to present yourself as an OSPI professional, appropriate with the public trust associated with your position.
- **Be respectful.** Individuals should be thoughtful in personal posts and respectful of how other people in your work and personal life may be affected or viewed by those who read your posts. When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- **Honor others' privacy.** If you plan to post photos you have taken of work-related events and activities, be courteous by checking first with co-workers who are in the picture. Not everyone wants their photo displayed on the Internet.
- **Strive for accuracy.** Make sure you have your facts straight before posting.
- **Correct errors quickly.** If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and quickly provide the correct information. If appropriate, modify an earlier post to make it clear that you have corrected an error.
- **Have no expectation of privacy.** It's social media, after all. Remember that posts in the social media world are or can easily be made available to the public at-large. Keep in mind that what you publish will be widely accessible for some time and, in some cases, indefinitely.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Guidelines and Best Practices for Social Media Use in Washington State](#)

Social Media Planning Sheet (sample)

What are you promoting?

Free summer meals at schools

Priority: Low Medium High

Channels:

Twitter

Facebook

YouTube [videos]

S:drive location of the file:

Flickr [for multiple photos]

S:drive location of the photos:

Other:

Key Messages:

Even though school is out, kids have access to nutritious meals
Schools host free summer meals

URL (call to action): <http://bit.ly/1qHkWHL>

Optional hashtags: [#waedu](#) [#childnutrition](#) [#nslp](#)