



Social Media Guide for parents, educators and staff at the DSK

Social Media, that an online media, with which users are able to share and collect opinions, impressions, experiences and information, often in real time, have become an essential part of our and our children's everyday life. Social media is allowed to be used from the age of +-13 years, however, this varies from app to app and from country to country. Social media has therefore also become increasingly important at school and digital media is now used for teaching more and more often.

The DSK wants to enable every learner to be independent, responsible and safe by offering a holistic education - especially in today's world, this also applies to social media. In order for you as a parent at the DSK, to be well prepared regarding this topic and in order for us teachers and staff of the DSK to be on the same page as you when it comes to your child(ren)'s gaining of social media competencies, this Social Media Guide for parents at the DSK has been compiled.

It is only a guideline and should by no means be seen as mandatory. Should you have further questions, worries or pick up possible indications in your child, the teachers, staff and the media team of the DSK will of course be available for you anytime.

What are the possible risks for my child and me?

In order to understand why we created a social media guide, here are some things to consider:

What can my child see or do on social media?

- seeing or sharing of violent, sexual and pornographic content
- inaccurate or false information and extreme views
- promotion of harmful behaviour, i.e. self-harm, anorexia or suicide
- sharing of personal information
- actively or unintentionally getting involved in bullying or hurtful behaviour

How could this affect my child?

- Fear of missing out (FOMO) leading to excessive use or exaggeration
- Getting upset by things they have seen and being uncertain about what to do/how to deal with it
- Engaging, or being pressured into engaging in riskier behaviour either by accident or purposely
- Developing unrealistic, and perhaps depressing ideals of body image and gender

- Becoming subject to peer pressure or interactions that are too intense or too difficult to handle
- Creating an online reputation that may create problems for them in the (also very distant) future

Whom might my child meet on social media?

- People who might bully, intimidate or frighten
- People posing behind 'fake profiles' for:
 - Mischief-making, causing harm
 - Sexual grooming and stalking
 - Blackmail and extortion
 - Identity theft and hacking

Therefore, it is vitally important to not just talk about security and security settings with your child but in fact you should actually check them!

Ask them to show you which social media apps they use and what they like about them.

Talk about how they use them and what makes them so engaging.

Explain how you can use privacy settings to make sure, only approved friends can see posts & images.

Check if any of their apps have 'geo-location' enabled, sharing their location unintentionally.

Show them how to report offensive comments or block people who upset them.

Check 'tagging' settings so that when others are posting or sharing photos online, your child's identity is not revealed. Also, get a **person's consent** before sharing photos.

Encourage your child to **come and talk to you** if they see anything that upsets them.

You can find out more about how children use social media, the apps they use, the risks they face, how to use privacy settings, as well as advice and tips about how to talk to your children on:

www.childnet.com/sns

www.thinkyouknow.co.uk/parents

www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety

www.askaboutgames.com

www.parentzone.org.uk

How much is too much social media?

According to UNICEF, some social media time is good and helps build relationships in a modern, online world. Too much, however, can be damaging to our health. Some statistics claim an average teen spends about 9 hours a day on a screen. Psychologists suggest two of these hours on social media are the threshold when contributing to anxiety and unhappiness amongst teens. After that, it seems to become problematic. According to studies, it is vitally important to fill as much time with face-to-face interactions with friends and family, sports and leisure time activities.

Screen time in general should be dealt with in this way. While it is, on the one hand, important and healthy for a teenager to work and learn digitally via apps like word or powerpoint or researching content online, it is also important on the other hand, to use the good old pen to write down notes or read the next book as a paper version instead of a the kindle version.

Should we monitor our kids' social media use? If so, how?

It is the same old story: *Does my child need privacy or must I rather check up on her/his activities?*

Everybody deserves privacy, especially a teen in the middle of puberty! If there is an environment of trust, your child will talk about the bully on Instagram the same way she/he will talk about the bully in class.

Educate your child about predators, sexting, bullying, and so on. If your child shows a change in behaviour, talk to her/him and maybe get help. Checking the content on social media should be a last resort, nevertheless, should you fear for your child's safety, do not forget to check her/his social media for any signs.

Statistics show that 71% of teens admit to hiding online activities from their parents. Implement a trustful environment that makes your child not feel the need of being amongst those 71%. Should push comes to shove and you feel the need of checking your child's online activities, here are some useful apps:

- **Norton:** This allows you to set phone time limits and filter web content coming in.
- **TeenSafe:** This allows you to track your child's calls, texts, GPS and social media activity.
- **MobSafetyRangerBrowser:** This enables you to view your child's website browsing and set time limits.
- **PhoneSheriff:** This enables you to do all of the above, but it is available for fewer devices.
- **DinnerTime:** This allows you to limit phone Internet use during family meals.
- **Qustodio:** This allows you to track and set a phone curfew where phones shut down.

There are several other apps that empower a parent to control and check their child's online behaviour. Feel free to talk to us if you need any advice. Most importantly though, encourage your child to use privacy settings to ensure their posts are going out to a select set of friends only.

How should I behave on social media?

Think through your posts! An ultrasound image, first giggle, indiscriminating pictures... to you it is sharing precious moments, to the rest of the world, it's just content. Just like anything else, your information can be copied, shared, or misused. Ask yourself these three questions:

- *How will this make others feel?*
- *How wide is my network?*
- *Is my profile public or private?*

Be careful about your child's "digital footprint." A profile creates a digital footprint, which invites data tracking, marketing, and other privacy issues. If you decide to share, make sure you include only minimal information, use strict privacy settings, and avoid any photos that are potentially embarrassing. After all, you are not sharing something about yourself but about somebody else, your child!

How do I handle arguments about their portable device?

The easiest way to implement certain guidelines on social media regarding time and content is a contract. It avoids lengthy discussions and can be set up in cooperation with your child. This way, when both parties have signed, you have an agreement to which you refer when needed.

Here is an example of such a contract as you find them online:

Social Media Contract for Tweens

- I understand the use of social media is a privilege and not a right. I understand that my parent(s) or guardian(s) may revoke these privileges at any time for bad behaviour, uncooperative behaviour, for allowing my grades to fall, or for failure to chip in and help with family chores and responsibilities.
- I understand that I should never use social media to torment or harass a schoolmate, teacher, or any other person. I will not participate in online fights, threaten others, or encourage others to behave badly or inappropriately.
- I understand that my parent(s) or guardian(s) have the right to review my online behaviour and that they should have access to my password and accounts.
- I understand that I will not use inappropriate language on social media or post photos that could be embarrassing to myself, my family members, friends, or classmates.
- I understand that I should keep my parent(s) or guardian(s) informed if others are using social media to bully, threaten or harass me.
- I understand that the best policy regarding social media is, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."
- I understand that I will get my parent(s) or guardian(s) permission before establishing an account with a social media site such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.
- I understand that bad behaviour on social media could reflect poorly on me and my family –also in the distant future.

Social Media Contract for Parents or Guardians

- I promise to help my child identify the pros and cons of using social media.
- I promise that I will check my child's social media accounts on occasion to be sure that he/she is staying safe and behaving appropriately on social media.
- I promise not to overreact if I see something on social media that concerns me. Rather, I will calmly discuss the matter with my tween and work through the situation together.
- I promise that my child may come to me at any time to troubleshoot a social media challenge, such as bullying, taunting, or other bad behaviours.
- I promise that should my child break our social media rules I will enforce fair but firm consequences for the behaviour.
- I promise to set a good example on how to behave on social media for my child by avoiding profanity, mean-spiritedness, bullying, sarcastic, or other antisocial behaviours or attitudes.
- I promise to take immediate action if I determine that my child's safety is in any way in question due to social media, which may include confiscating my child's phone, contacting my child's school or local law enforcement officials if necessary.

Signed: _____ (Parent's Signature) _____ (Date)

Signed: _____ (Tween's Signature) _____ (Date)

What are possible symptoms that a learner needs to cut back on social media?

Statistics claim, 50% of teens say they are addicted to their cell phone, 66% of parents feel their teen spends too much time on their cell phone.

Here are some clear signs that show your child is spending too much time on digital devices:

- Withdrawing from face-to-face social interaction
- Consistent anxiety, stress or feeling overwhelmed by normal routines
- Grades begin to slip and assignments reflect poor work or are left undone
- Avoidance of real-life responsibilities, such as chores or homework
- Ill at ease, ill-equipped or unresponsive to people in front of them
- Phubbing—teens snub people next to them by looking down at their phone
- Phones begin to create conflict in their closest relationships

Unplugging on a regular basis gets you 'back down' from the electronic high and reduces the stress. The inability to do that, even for a day, is a clear sign of addiction.

Social Media Guide for Educators and Staff at the DSK

Educators use social media on a daily basis to connect with colleagues near and far, to connect with learners and in their private life. In fact, approximately 82% of teachers, principals/headmasters and school librarians engage in some sort of social networking, according to a 2012 survey by EdWeb and MMS Education. Furthermore, teachers are also using social media to enable learning and collaboration among learners in the classroom.

Lesson plans involving social media require safeguarding both learner privacy and productivity. In addition, educators must accept that using poor judgment on a public social network — even on a personal account — can have professional consequences.

This guide shall therefore help educators at the DSK to avoid situations that are harmful for themselves or others and to use social media effectively and professionally.

Do's and Don'ts for educators and staff using social media

Do's:

- Putting a boundary between school and personal life including social media is good for your career and less stress on you.
- Strict privacy settings that are frequently reviewed for every channel used.
- Know and adhere the Social Media Policy of the DSK.

Don'ts:

- **Don't** say anything on your social media profile that you wouldn't say in class.
- **Don't** get too chatty with learners or parents. This may confuse learners and parents into thinking you're available 24/7.
- **Don't** share too much publicly.
- Be sure not to make copyright materials available globally.
- Free speech rights are fairly limited for educators. It is protected only if you speak out as citizens on "matters of public concern" and it does not disrupt the school.
- Don't vent online.
- Don't geotag your posts with your school location.
- Don't post anything related to a learner. **Never, ever, ever post photos of your learners on social media!** Each parent has their own personal beliefs about posting their child's likeness online. Some parents overshare while others don't want their children online at all. It is not your place to post their children online. You are also violating a learner's privacy by doing this. Not only are you sharing their location information (if your location/school is listed in your profile, that child is now associated with that location/school) but they may not feel comfortable having photos of themselves online at all.
- Don't counsel a learner online.
- It is unwise to befriend learners on public social media sites and thereby mixing the classroom with the private life.

The use of social media in education

Social media extends learning far beyond the classroom, allowing learners to interact with specialists in various fields. There are, however, also concerns to increasing learner access to social media sites, particularly if its use disrupts learning. Research shows that such interruptions can significantly impair a learner's ability to integrate content into their long-term memory.

Social networking can help learners connect and collaborate with each other, enhance learner relationships and give socially anxious or introverted learners a comfortable way to interact with their classmates. However, it can be harmful to use publicly accessible networks and sites like Facebook or Twitter to connect learners to peers and experts outside the classroom without the appropriate security settings. These security settings should be discussed with the learners as well as the parents before using them as an educational tool and it is advisable to rather not use public social media sites if one is unsure about how to secure the privacy of everybody involved. After all, Office365 enables social conversation via Teams, collaboration via OneNote or SharePoint, secured by passwords and safely useable within the DSK community.

Outside the classroom, social media often is used for finding and sharing resources on Facebook, Twitter or Pinterest. Sites such as Discovery Education Network or Scholastic Discussion Forums provide spaces for educators to connect with colleagues. These sites provide more privacy than Facebook. But Hashtag-driven chats on Twitter also contain discussions including teachers and advisory groups.

Negative aspects to be kept in mind

Thoughtful interaction is one of the best safeguards against the misuse of social media. Nevertheless, there are dangers of social networking that should be kept in mind:

- Unprofessional or offensive public postings from teachers' personal accounts, such as foul language or inappropriate party pictures.
- The to-friend-or-not-to-friend dilemma between teachers and learners on social networks
- The actions on a public social network may be visible to learners, parents, school members and even the media.

Use of Social Media in the classroom

1. Establish a clear purpose for using social media based on the way(s) in which it supports course learning objectives.
2. Set well-defined guidelines. Be sure to let learners know what is expected of them. Specify the extent of collaboration.
3. Make sure that learners are aware of intellectual property and copyright laws. Posting work online can be considered publishing and distributing.
4. Determine a clear policy on what constitutes misuse. Expectations for how students should communicate online, "*netiquette*," should be plainly stated.

5. Provide advice on privacy settings. Social media sites update their terms of use and the mechanics of their site frequently; check the security and privacy settings of your accounts regularly to ensure your settings and expectations of privacy are met.

Should you have any further questions or inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact:

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