

#ABC Conduct

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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

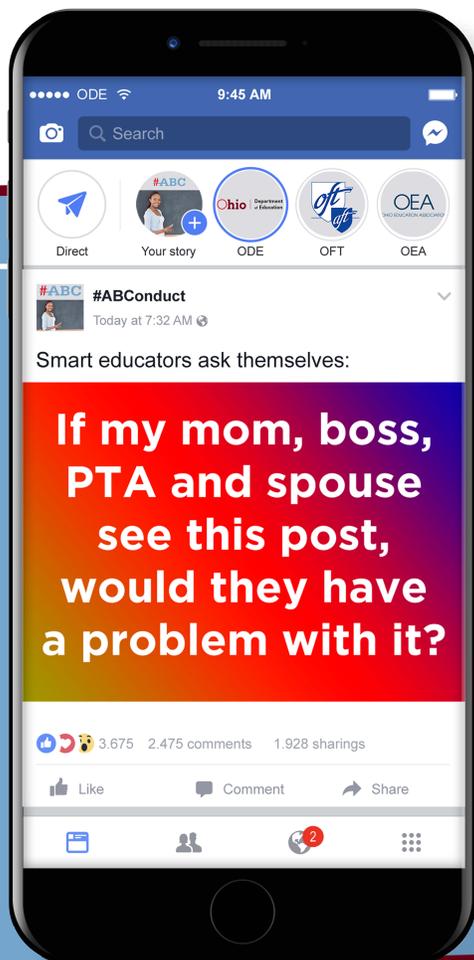
Tip 1: Remember, the *Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators* applies all day, every day, even to your personal social media accounts. If someone would have a problem with your planned post, it could mean a problem for you.

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:

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.

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

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.