

**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL
SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION USE POLICY
FOR STAFF**

Introduction and Scope

Yeshiva University High School for Girls and Yeshiva University High School for Boys (collectively “YUHS” or “the School”) understand that technology has brought us myriad new ways to communicate with each other. Social media and other electronic communications can serve as powerful tools to enhance education, communication and information-sharing with those inside and outside the YUHS community. While these forms of communication allow for many advances in learning and in creating connections between people, they can also encroach on an individual’s privacy and create questions of propriety. To clearly mark the appropriate boundaries and to protect and enhance the relationships between staff and students as well as the relationships among members of the staff, YUHS has adopted this Policy for the use of social media and electronic communications.

This Policy applies to all YUHS staff, including faculty, administration, athletic personnel and other staff (whether full-time or part-time), volunteers and employees of Yeshiva University and other contracted service providers working at or for YUHS (collectively “staff” or “staff members”).

This Policy is directed at social media and electronic communication use by staff, and interactions between staff and students, and among staff. It applies to activity that occurs no matter where the staff member or student is physically located, whether inside or outside of School, and whether the technology used is personally or School owned.

This Policy does not apply to communications between a student and staff member acting in his/her capacity as parent, guardian or family member of the student.

Definitions

Social media is any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, such as “posting,” including but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, among others, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. **Professional social media** is a work-related social media activity that is YUHS or other employment-based (e.g., a faculty member establishing a Facebook page or Twitter account for his/her YUHS class or a class at another school). **Personal social media** is a non-work-related social media activity (e.g., a faculty member establishing a Facebook page or Twitter account for his/her personal use). For the purposes of this Policy, any social media account used for both personal and professional reasons, even if minimal, will be considered professional social media.

Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, all aspects of voice, video, and data communications, such as voicemail, email, fax, text messaging and internet access text messages,

instant messages, games and other applications (“apps”), Chat services such as G-chat, Blackberry Messenger, Messenger I-chat and Face-Time and any other public or personal electronic communication or posting between two or more individuals.

Staff Use of Social Media for School-Related Purposes

Staff members who are interested in creating or using a forum, social networking site, blog or any other technology-based learning tool with a social media component must receive the prior approval of the Head of School or his/her designee. The staff member will be responsible for (i) supervising the content and interaction on the social media forum/site, (ii) regularly monitoring the forum/site and addressing inappropriate behavior or activity, (iii) ensuring appropriate adult-student relationships are maintained, and (iv) using appropriate privacy settings to control access to the forum/site by others. The staff member must provide to the Head of School or his/her designee all required forum/site access information and passwords.

Staff should understand that there is no expectation of privacy for this social media use. Communication should focus on relevant topics, and all participants must be courteous and productive and may not engage in communications that are profane, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, and inflammatory or otherwise in violation of YUHS’ Anti-Harassment Policy or other applicable YUHS policies. Additionally, staff members should not post communications that are defamatory or would constitute an invasion of an individual’s privacy. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom or a professional workplace is also inappropriate on a social media forum/site. YUHS may reject or remove comments or material on the forum/site for any reason, including, but not limited to, the belief that it violates any of YUHS’ policies. Staff members should engage in social media in a manner that is consistent with YUHS’ policies, including those found in the Employee Handbook.

Staff Use of Social Media for Non-School-Related Purposes or Personal Use

As representatives of YUHS and its values, all staff should remember that anything posted on a site may be viewable by others in the YUHS community, as well as others in the greater community. YUHS encourages staff to continually review the privacy setting on any sites and to exercise good judgment when posting content on such sites. In addition, staff should utilize appropriate privacy settings to prevent students from viewing their personal sites. Since prevention is not always possible, YUHS reminds staff members that they should conduct themselves on or off-line in accordance with the School's core values and policies. Staff members should engage in social media in a manner that is consistent with YUHS’ policies, including those found in the Employee Handbook.

In general, personal social media activity should be kept distinct from YUHS social media activity, and communications using purely personal or non-School social media sites should be conducted from personal e-mail accounts and personal computers/devices. In addition, the following standards should be observed:

- **Where Potential Ambiguity Exists, Provide Disclaimers.** A staff member may only speak on behalf of YUHS with the prior written approval of the Head of School or his/her designee. If ambiguity exists as to whether a staff member is speaking on his/her own behalf or on behalf of YUHS, the staff member should make clear that the views being expressed are his/her own and not necessarily YUHS' views, and the staff member should ensure that the words posted do not suggest that they are representing YUHS' position.
- **No Protectable Business Information.** Staff members should not disclose or use protectable business information, which includes proprietary or trade secret information, trademarks, copyrights, or other intellectual property, without the prior written approval of the Head of School or his/her designee.
- **Use Good Judgment.** Staff members should always consider the possible consequences of their contributions to social media given that, once posted, contributions may end up virtually anywhere online.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to prevent a staff member from engaging in union organizing activities, discussing his/her wages, hours, benefits, working conditions, or other terms and conditions of employment, or engaging in other actions which are legally protected under the National Labor Relations Act or other applicable state or federal law.

A violation of this Policy may lead to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Staff members should also be aware that they may be personally responsible for legal liability arising from or relating to the content of their personal social networking. Staff members should consult with the Head of School if they have any questions regarding this Policy, or if they are aware of any violations of this Policy.

Staff and Student Interaction using Social Media

Students and staff should not communicate on *personal* social media sites or platforms. Examples of such communication include, but are not limited to, “friending,” “following,” “commenting,” “liking” and posting messages on *personal* social media sites. Similarly, “posting” or “tagging” photos or videos of students on any *personal* social media site or platform by staff members is prohibited. If a staff member is currently engaged in such communication with a student, he/she should immediately cease such activity. Staff members who are involved in non-YUHS sponsored activities or employment requiring social media interaction with students are strongly encouraged to create a professional social media page to foster such communication. For example, if a staff member works at a summer camp attended by students and is encouraged to have social media interaction with these students/campers, the staff member should set up a professional (camp, in this example) social media page to engage in such communication.

Staff and Student Interaction Using Electronic Communication

All electronic communications between staff and students must be professional, acceptable in content to any reasonable person, and limited to information that is School-related and in compliance with YUHS’ Anti-Harassment Policy and other applicable YUHS policies.

YUHS has provided to all students and staff a YUHS email address. All electronic communications between staff and students should only be sent using YUHS-issued email addresses, and staff are strongly encouraged to limit communication to between the hours of 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time). If a personal email account must be used, a copy of the communication must also be sent to the YUHS email addresses of the student and staff member. The staff member should also inform the Head of School of the communication, and explain the circumstances surrounding the communication.

Staff members seeking to communicate one-on-one with a student outside the classroom using Skype or similar technology must obtain prior approval of the Head of School or his/her designee.

Communication between staff and students over personal cell phones has the potential to be interpreted as inappropriate and unprofessional. Accordingly, staff members should not call or text a student on the student’s personal cell phone and vice versa. Exceptions may be made if (1) the text qualifies as a “mass text” which is defined as a text message sent to more than one student, and the message relates to a School-related communication, or (2) a specific situation arises where the staff member needs to communicate with the student for a School-related purpose and there is no reasonable alternative available. For example, a coach who has a last minute change in game time or location, a teacher leading a School trip who needs to communicate with a student during the trip, or the School secretary who needs to locate a particular student during School hours.

In addition, staff should not give their personal cell phone numbers to students except when a specific student will need to communicate with the staff member outside of School for a School matter and there is no other reasonable alternative available as in the examples above. In such an instance, the staff member should instruct the student to only contact him/her for the School-

related purpose for which the phone number was given.

Additional Guidelines for Staff Participating in Social Media and Electronic Communications

The following are additional guidelines to abide by in social media and electronic communications.

Always use appropriate “netiquette.” Netiquette is the social code of network communication including manners and etiquette in the internet, online and digital worlds. Adhering to appropriate “netiquette” ensures that all students and staff are treated with the respect and sensitivity necessary to foster a safe working and learning environment. Some important general rules are:

- **Treat others as you would like to be treated.** Staff should be respectful of others in their communications, both private and public, and refrain from posting statements directed at others that are false, misleading, obscene, malicious, degrading, threatening, harassing, hateful, insulting, inflammatory, offensive, unlawful, fraudulent, discriminatory or invasive of the privacy of others.
- **Always use appropriate language.** Staff should not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful language.
- **Be honest.** Make sure that you are honest and accurate. Never post any information or news that you do not believe to be true. If you make a mistake, you should correct it immediately.
- **Protect Personal Information.** Do not post Personal Information. “Personal Information” means information that can be used to identify an individual, such as an individual’s name, work or home address, e-mail address, telephone or facsimile number, Social Security number (SSN) or other government identification number, employment information, background information, financial tracking information, medical or health information, health insurance identification number or condition, account numbers, certificate or license numbers, vehicle identifiers or serial numbers (including license plate numbers), device identifiers or serial numbers, biometric identifiers (including finger and voice prints) and photographs.

Speak up and report inappropriate conduct. Staff must promptly report to the Head of School any incident that is not consistent with this Policy, including the Guidelines, or any other YUHS policy. For example, a staff member who becomes aware that a student has received an abusive, offensive, threatening or harassing email message or other such communication must immediately report that communication to the Head of School.

Know and follow the rules. Staff must carefully read this Policy, including the Guidelines, to ensure that postings and communications are consistent with them. YUHS reserves the right to

modify this Policy, including the Guidelines, at any time, and staff must check periodically to ensure that they are familiar with any modifications or other changes to this Policy.

Staff should also be sure that postings and communications do not violate any other applicable policies of the School, including but not limited to, YUHS' Anti-Harassment Policy. The same rules and customs that guide behavior without computers and other tools apply when using them.

Discipline

Staff who violate this Policy, including the Guidelines, may be subject to disciplinary action. The School reserves the right in its sole and absolute discretion to implement any disciplinary action up to and including termination of a staff member's engagement with the School in the event of any violation of this Policy.

Violations of this Policy should be reported immediately to the Head of School at _____@yuhsg.org or _____@yuhsb.org.

Our students' safety is our utmost concern and responsibility. Therefore, in the event of an emergency, staff may communicate with students in any manner they reasonably deem appropriate.