

HCOE Social Media Guidelines

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Table of Contents

HCOE Social Media.....	0
Guidelines.....	0
<i>Adopted January 2017 Revised July 2025</i>	0
Purpose of Social Media in Education.....	1
Social Media Guidelines for Employees and Associated Persons.....	1
Tips for Responsible Social Media Use	3
Social Media Pages.....	3
Using Social Media.....	3
Content Deletion Guidelines	4
Advertising on HCOE’s Social Media.....	4
Limitations on Social Media Advertising	5
Social Media Posting Best Practices And Considerations.....	5
Legal Liability	6
Press Inquiries	6
Confidentiality And Privacy	6
Additional Assistance	7

Purpose of Social Media in Education

The Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) recognizes the importance of using social media as a tool to connect and share information with our community partners. With proper precautions, HCOE supports the use of social media to further its vision and mission.

Social media sites have become the primary source of information for most users. Staying current and engaging families and the community with a strong web presence is important. Pairing social media with other communication channels will foster engagement and ensure our message maintains our mission and values.

An official HCOE social media platform is a site authorized by the Humboldt County Superintendent of Schools and the Community Outreach & Engagement Department. Sites and pages that have not been authorized by the Superintendent or designee, but contain content related to the organization or comments on educational operations, such as a site created by a school or related organization, a student or employee's personal site, are not considered official HCOE social media platforms.

The purpose of using social media is to share news and information about programs, events, and resources within the educational context. This document contains HCOE's guidelines regarding the use of online social media. These guidelines will continue to evolve as new social media tools and platforms are introduced.

Social Media Guidelines for Employees and Associated Persons

All Employees and Associated Persons of the Humboldt County Office of Education (hereafter referred to as users) are responsible for adhering to the following list of responsibilities. Associated Persons include contractors, service providers, volunteers, or others working on behalf of HCOE programs.

1. Users shall obtain approval by the Superintendent of Schools or designee before setting up any social media platforms on behalf of any HCOE departments, programs, or services.
2. Users are responsible for the information they post, share, or respond to online.
3. Users are encouraged to utilize privacy settings to control access to personal networks, web pages, profiles, posts, digital media, forums, fan pages, etc.

4. Users should avoid online interactions with current students, and alumni under the age of 18, on social networking sites outside of those websites/webpages dedicated for educational use.
5. Users should only contact students under the age of 18 for educational purposes.
6. Users should not post photos or videos of fellow employees without their written permission, or without a signed media release form.
7. Users who use social media shall not post photos, videos, or written information about students without written parent/legal guardian consent, or without a signed media release form.
8. Users who use social media or identify themselves online as a HCOE employee or associate should ensure that their profile maintains professionalism and is consistent with how they wish to present themselves to colleagues, parents/legal guardians, and students.
9. Users who post inappropriate, threatening, harassing, racist, biased, derogatory, disparaging or bullying comments toward or against any individual on HCOE's social media site(s) may be subject to disciplinary or other legal action.
10. When discussing HCOE related matters in online social media, users should write in the first person and identify themselves by name and, if relevant, by HCOE title. Employees and Associated Persons should consider adding a disclaimer to their personal social media sites: *"The opinions and positions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the positions, strategies, or opinions of HCOE."* This standard disclaimer does not exempt employees from their responsibilities as explained in these guidelines.
11. Users shall not share confidential information at any time.
12. Use of any HCOE or program-related logos or images as a profile on one's personal social networking sites is prohibited unless approved in advance. If an employee wishes to promote a specific HCOE activity or event, the employee should contact the Superintendent or Community Outreach & Engagement Department for guidance/permission.
13. Users should be aware that all their online activity is public.

Tips for Responsible Social Media Use

1. Comments should be civil and include information that accurately reflects HCOE, its programs, and/or services.
2. Employees should be mindful that what is published online will potentially be archived for years to come.
3. Employees should be aware that all policies of HCOE may apply to interactions between colleagues across HCOE sponsored social media platforms.
4. Employees may not endorse a commercial product or service or a political party or election issue while using HCOE sponsored social media platforms.

Social Media Pages

Department managers and staff are encouraged to work with the Community Outreach & Engagement Department so updates and important information can be shared on their behalf to appropriate social media channels.

No division, department or employee is permitted to create a stand-alone social media page or online presence without the prior approval from the Superintendent or Community Outreach & Engagement Department.

The Community Outreach & Engagement Department manages the social media platforms for HCOE. Only Community Outreach & Engagement Department staff members and pre-approved users are authorized to post and/or update HCOE-related social media platforms.

Pre-approved page administrators must clearly communicate to the Superintendent or designee the long-term goals for their social media page, indicate who will be responsible for regularly creating and adding content, and decide who will be responsible for monitoring and answering questions from the public, removing inappropriate comments, etc.

Using Social Media

Social Media posts on HCOE official sites shall reflect HCOE and should therefore be written and structured in an appropriate, ethical, professional, and lawful manner. Use of HCOE official social media sites and approved programs indicates that you have read and will abide by the responsibility guidelines. HCOE reserves the right to **moderate and remove any comments and posts** that do not fall within its official guidelines on official HCOE platforms.

1. Employees and Associated Persons are welcome and encouraged to engage with HCOE social media sites (e.g., comments, photo tagging, retweets, etc.). You do not need prior approval to engage with social media if the use is in accordance with the guidelines and best practices referenced in this document. Districts are encouraged to engage with and cross promote HCOE related sites and use the same social media guidelines and procedures that govern social media usage.

Content Deletion Guidelines

HCOE reserves the right to remove content or comments that:

- Are defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, intimidating, hateful, libelous, obscene or may be considered hostile
 - Contain unauthorized commercial solicitations, such as spam or includes links to other sites
 - Advocate illegal activity
 - Infringe on copyrights or trademarks
 - Contain obscenities/obscene materials
 - Depict or promote violence
 - Advertise for a commercial business
 - Violate student privacy
 - Violate staff privacy
2. Logos or images produced and representing this office and/or related programs may not be posted to a social media site without specific approval from the Superintendent or Community Outreach & Engagement Department.

Advertising on HCOE's Social Media

HCOE will occasionally use its social media sites to conduct paid advertising in an effort to promote its programs. In general, the Community Outreach & Engagement Department will make the final decision regarding a paid advertising campaign.

Campaigns advertising HCOE job openings are coordinated through the Human Resources Department. Any HCOE department wishing to advertise a job opening should consult with the Human Resources Department. If a job opening is deemed to be appropriate for advertising, Human Resources will work with the Community Outreach and Engagement Department on placing the ad.

Limitations on Social Media Advertising

Social media can be a useful tool when promoting our programs and job openings. However, HCOE does not wish for its social media to simply become a jobs platform. As such, social media job advertisements must be coordinated through Human Resources.

Additionally, HCOE will not use its its social media reach to advertise jobs for districts, with the sole exception of Superintendent, Superintendent/Principal positions, and Charter Director positions.

Social Media Posting Best Practices And Considerations

Although online conversations and media posts on social media sites are often casual, they must remain professional and respectful. Comments on social media pages may be monitored to ensure compliance with its social networking guidelines. Those posts not in compliance with HCOE guidelines will be removed.

1. Consider a few basic objectives before creating a social media post:
 - What do you plan to achieve with this social media post?
 - What kind of information do you want to share or receive on the page?
 - Who (what audience) will engage, read and comment on your social media post?
 - Is this social media setting the appropriate venue for your communication?
2. Personal information should not be posted on social media sites, including but not limited to: Student Identification Numbers, Employee Identification Numbers, Social Security Numbers, Personal Addresses, Phone Numbers, or Driver's License Numbers.
3. Social media sites are not private, and the expectation of privacy is not conveyed to you as a user or administrator of the site. Expect questions, feedback and comments directed to you individually.
4. Photos/Videos posted on social media pages should accurately portray the Humboldt County Office of Education and the persons depicted in the photos/videos. The following guidelines should be followed when posting photos/videos:
 - Photos/Videos must not violate the "Content Deletion Guidelines" (see above).
 - Photos/Videos of children should not be posted without the express consent release from their parents/legal guardians. Always use great caution when posting photos/videos of young children.
 - Photos/Videos of public events can be posted on social media sites, but they should be appropriate and reflect the organization in a positive light. The posts should contain content that may be posted on HCOE's approved social media and

- web sites in accordance with HCOE guidelines. Basic rules of good taste and appropriate policy standards will be observed.
- Photos/Videos that are not public or are not produced by HCOE must have a media release signed by each person in the photo/video.
5. Consider the image you want to portray about HCOE and yourself to the public. Be mindful that what you post may be viewed by parents/legal guardians, students, administrators, and community members. As we all know, in this digital age, *posts may remain permanent online*. Therefore:
- Ensure that you are providing accurate information at all times.
 - Use your best judgment, and if in doubt, don't post.
 - Don't be afraid to seek advice by contacting the Community Outreach & Engagement Department for guidance.
6. Social media site design/colors should maintain uniformity with HCOE or program color and official design standards from site to site. These design schemes, along with the official HCOE logo(s), represent our unique branding presentation to the public. HCOE social media sites should refer to the latest logo/color scheme usage guidelines to maintain uniformity in our branding practices and outreach to the community. Please contact the Community Outreach & Engagement Department for guidance, if needed.

Legal Liability

Employees need to be aware that they are legally liable for anything they may write or present online. They can be sued by any individual or organization, including other HCOE employees, who view such commentary, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment.

Press Inquiries

Postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you about a social media posting or requests additional information, please contact the Director of Community Outreach and Engagement to provide further information or arrange for contact with the content provider. Always confirm that any information posted has been publicly disclosed.

Confidentiality And Privacy

Respect the privacy of management and staff and the opinions of others. Before sharing a comment, post, picture, or video, obtain their permission first.

Additional Assistance

For more information, or to request a post using HCOE social media platforms, please contact Stacy Young, Community Outreach and Engagement Director at (707) 445-7024 or syoung@hcoe.org.