

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: Should I friend my child's teacher on Facebook?

**A:** Ask your child's teacher to set up a parent group or page on Facebook. This is a much better way for parents and teachers to interact.

### Q: Should I allow my child to friend their teacher on Facebook?

**A:** The NYC DOE recommends that students do not friend teachers on Facebook. Instead ask your child's teacher to set up a parent group or page on Facebook.

### Q: I'd like my children's teacher to use social media to help prepare them for success. Is there any professional development for teachers?

**A:** Yes. Teachers should be in touch with the Network that supports their school to schedule professional development.

### Q: What about cyberbullying?

**A:** Bullying is not tolerated in school. The Discipline Code addresses cyberbullying. Schools can contact the Office of Safety and Youth Development with questions and to request information, support and/or an onsite presentation. <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/DisciplineCode>

### Q. How do I access the social media guidelines?

**A:** The social media guidelines are on the NYC DOE website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/SocialMedia>



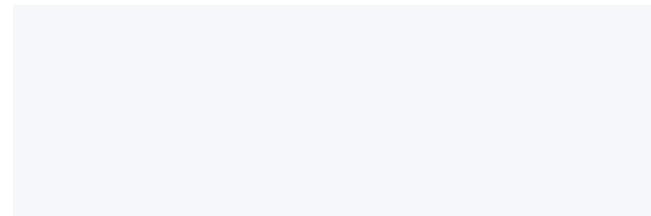
### For More Information and Assistance:

To find out what's happening at school to help students become responsible digital citizens, talk to your school's parent coordinator, guidance counselor or school librarian.

Information about DOE's social media policies and social guidelines can be found at <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/SocialMedia>. You can review the DOE's Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy at <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/InternetAcceptableUse>

**Common Sense Media** provides free online access to videos, discussion guides, tip sheets, and presentations for parents. Resources are available in both English and Spanish. Visit <http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/parent-media-education> to access these materials.

**The Lamp** has produced a series of resource guides including: A Beginner's Guide to Going Online and A Guide to Healthy Digital Relationships. Visit <http://www.thelampnyc.org/resources/> to access these free resources.



Division of Family and Community Engagement  
Parents & Families

# Understanding Social Media

## Encouraging Responsible Digital Citizenship and Social Media Use



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In the age of “Generation Text,” it is important for parents to know how to help their children become responsible social media users and responsible digital citizens. Being involved in your child’s digital world can be fun and informative. It can also help you and your child develop an honest and open relationship about social media and social media use. The following information and resources can help parents and families begin this important conversation.

### What is social media?

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and Flickr.

### Why do students need to use social media?

Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning. The Social Media Guidelines were created to provide guidance regarding recommended practices for professional social media communication between Department of Education (DOE) employees, as well as social media communication between DOE employees and DOE students. You can read DOE’s social media guidelines at <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/SocialMedia/default.htm>

### What is the purpose of the guidelines?

Social media can help prepare students for success in their education and in their careers. The Chancellor is committed to ensuring that all DOE staff and students use social media in a safe and responsible manner. The Guidelines describe recommended practices for use of social media by DOE staff.

### How do I know if my child will be using social media?

NYC DOE staff members will notify parents if they plan to use social media into their work with students. If a parent has questions or would like to discuss the benefits of using social media for learning should contact their child’s teacher or other school staff. A parent who does not want their child using social media has the right to opt out.

### May parents and students interact with teachers using social media?

Teachers should communicate with students, parents, and guardians using their professional email address and professional online accounts and spaces. It is not recommended that students, parents or guardians communicate with teachers via their personal email or social media spaces. Communication between staff, students, and teachers should be of professional nature. If you have a concern or question about communication from staff, please speak to your school’s principal.

### Discussing Social Media and its Responsible Use

Here are five tips to get you started:

#### 1. Discuss online safety.

Have ongoing conversations with your child about online etiquette and safety. Remind your child not to give out his or her phone number, address, or other important information without your consent, and to communicate only with people he or she knows. Also, allow your child to develop independence online, just as he or she is increasingly independent in the physical world.

#### 2. Ask your child to teach you.

Today’s children are digital natives and are often technologically savvy. Ask your child to teach you how to use his or her favorite social media sites and discuss them. This is a great way to learn about your child’s online behavior.

#### 3. Set an example.

Practice safe and responsible online habits in front of your child. You are your child’s most important role model. Be the digital citizen you want your child to be.

#### 4. Help your child create a positive online reputation.

A positive online reputation is important for academic, career, and social success. Encourage your child to be respectful and communicate positively with the online community. Explain that it’s not always easy to delete offensive or questionable content.

#### 5. Encourage offline activities.

To achieve academic success, your child should be focusing on schoolwork, responsibilities at home, and other positive offline activities. Outside activities are also important for a child’s social success, health, and wellbeing.