

Do's & Don'ts

Social Networking & Protect Your Career

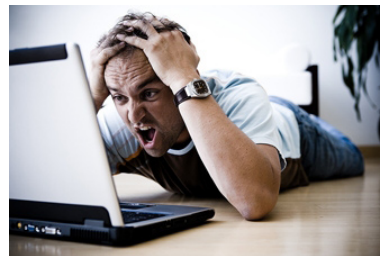
Social networks are web-based, online communities that allow individuals to come together to share personal information, photos and other common interests. Examples of social networks include Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn. Students, parents and co-workers are all using social networks to keep in touch with family and friends. We do not discourage the use of social networks, but we offer these suggestions to help protect you in your role as educator.

Do's:

- Make sure only your friends can view your search listing and profile. Go to Account-Privacy Settings-Customized Settings and set most settings to Friends Only.
- Remove yourself from Google search listings. Facebook profiles now show up in Google search listings, but you can opt out of search entirely to prevent your students from knowing you're on Facebook. Go to Account-Privacy Settings-Applications and Web Sites-Edit Your Settings-Public Search-Edit Settings, then unclick Enable Public Search.
- Be vigilant about what others post about you. "Untag" photos of yourself that you don't want students or parents to see.
- Before posting something, ask yourself, "Would I want my [principal, students, parents] to see this?"
- Be careful about linking your Facebook with other social networking sites. If you update your status on a linked Twitter account, it will publish to Facebook where others might see it.
- Sort your friends by lists. If you're friends with your fellow educators and principals, you may want to add them to a school list with restricted viewing abilities. Once you've created your list, go to Friends-Edit Friends-Create a List-Customize Settings. After you create your lists, go to Account-Privacy Settings-Customize Settings where you can determine who sees what.
- Use common sense when you're using social media.

Don'ts:

- Don't accept friend requests from current or potential students or their family members.
- Don't accept anyone whom you do not know personally as a friend. Just like email, information and photos from sites like Facebook are not fully protected and can be obtained.
- Don't join groups that may be considered unprofessional or inappropriate, and leave any such group of which you may already be a member.
- Don't post vulgar or obscene language, materials, photos or links that may be considered inappropriate or unprofessional. If you don't want to see it on the front page of the local newspaper, don't post it.
- Don't post any negative information about your students, co-workers or school administrators.



an NEA affiliate