Social Media Policy

Social media refers to online tools and services that allow any Internet user to create and publish content. Many of these sites use personal profiles where users post information about themselves. Social media allows those with common interests to share content easily, expanding the reach of their ideas and work. Popular social media tools include Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube and Flickr to name a few.

Below are guidelines to follow when members of the HELP community (students, faculty, board members, and staff) are representing HELP in social media spaces, regardless of whether these are considered professional or personal spaces.

Use good judgment

- We expect good judgment in all situations. Behave in a way that will make you and others proud and reflect well on HELP.
- Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you have shared on your social network is public information.

Be respectful

- Always treat others in a respectful, positive, and considerate manner.

Be responsible and ethical

- Because you represent HELP, please stick to discussing only those educational-related matters that are within your area of responsibility.
- Adults should be open about their affiliation with HELP and the role/position they hold.
- If you are someone's peer, interact with them online if you are so inclined. If you are an employee thinking about interacting with a student, consider the following questions before proceeding. What is the purpose of my interaction with a student? (If it is not related to your classroom activities, reconsider using a social network.) What is the social network in which I propose to interact with a student? (If the social network in question has limited professional applications – Facebook, for instance – reconsider using that social network.) If you are uncertain how to proceed, consult Kate Funk.
- Share and interact in a way that will enhance your reputation, the reputation of others, and the reputation of the school, rather than damage them.

Be accurate and appropriate

- Check all work for correct use of grammar and spelling before posting.
- A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and other social networks involves passing on interesting content or sharing links to helpful resources. However, never blindly repost a link without looking at the content first.

And if you don't get it right ...

- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make it clear what you've done to fix the mistake.
- Apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.
- If it's a major mistake (e.g., exposing private information or reporting confidential information), please let Kate Funk know immediately so HELP can take the proper steps to help minimize the impact it may have.

Be confidential

- Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential or private. Online "conversations" are never private.
- Use caution if asked to share your birth date, address, and cell phone number on any website.

Respect private and personal information

- To ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide.
- Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations.
- Never share or transmit personal information of students, parents, faculty, staff, or colleagues online.
- While taking care when posting to safeguard people's privacy, be sure – as necessary and appropriate – to give proper credit to sources. In cases of doubt, privacy should be the default.
- Generally use only first names of students. There may be special circumstances where a student is widely known for a particular achievement, in which case the use of the full name may be appropriate. If there is any doubt, use only first names or ask Kate Funk.
- Always respect the privacy of school community members.

Post images with care

- Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the HELP or Woodland Vallley Church.
- Do not caption photos with the names of current students.