

## Digital Community Norms

We are a school that prides itself on being open and connected, and our online connections support and strengthen our community and educational experiences. **Because of the potentially public, persistent, searchable, and decontextualized nature of social media, content produced by OES community members has the potential to impact, positively or negatively, student-teacher, teacher-family, colleague, and employer-employee relationships.** OES's Digital Community Norms are meant to overlay existing community norms onto the changing landscape of social media for students and adults in order to provide a **philosophy** of digital community and relationships, **caution** as to the persistence and reach of content shared through social media, and **support** for all community members.

Here are our expectations for the OES community:

**Do what's best for students.** This is the foundation of all of our work. Engagement in social media is a key component of local and global communities and opens possibilities for personal and professional growth for students and adults. The participation of caring adults, whether they be parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, advisors, coaches, or administrators, in social media affords the opportunity to help students explore who they are, who they want to be, and how they want to be seen, helping guide their understanding of how context, audience, and identity intersect.

**Be open and inclusive, participate, contribute, be professional; Acknowledge, respect, and honor differences in our community; Assume you do not know the whole story.** We, students and adults, are a community that seeks to honor and respect a diversity of ideas, perspectives, experiences, and traditions, and we aim to develop the skills and awareness necessary to become vital, contributing members of our increasingly diverse communities, on and offline. Navigating networked publics is complicated, and content on social media can reach unintended audiences out of context, because it can be easily copied, broadcast, and searched. Mindful digital participation can bring about more transparent, diverse, and democratic communities.

**Respect confidentiality.** Once content is published, it is potentially public. We agree to adhere to privacy requests by the school, parents, students, and colleagues and not share information or pictures without clear consent. The Employee Handbook articulates our policy regarding confidentiality, and we agree to abide by that policy online just as we do offline. Employees are expected to respect and maintain the confidential nature of all confidential and proprietary information concerning the school and the OES community.

**Set appropriate boundaries.** Use of social media and networking sites, personal websites and blogs should never harm OES's employees, students, or families. All of OES's policies, including but not limited to its policies regarding discrimination, harassment, retaliation, bullying, student relationships, professional communication, confidentiality, prevention of workplace violence, and mandatory child abuse reporting, extend to employees' communication online and/or with students at all times. All communications to students, including but not limited to communication via social media, should be conducted with the same professional attention to

content and tone that guides communication on campus and in the classroom. If a student reaches out to you for emotional support online, you should treat it as you would an on-campus request for support, and help guide the student to the appropriate people or resources.

**Create a strong community built on the responsible, compassionate, and ethical actions of students, teachers and families.** We understand the position of power and the associated responsibility that we carry in the care of young people, and we agree to make informed, professional decisions about how and why we connect to students, parents, and colleagues.

**Help to set the right tone.** Neither the school nor its employees can be held responsible for monitoring all activity on social media; however, we have the ability to re-direct an on-line conversation that contains inappropriate, hurtful or concerning content. Furthermore, as mandatory reporters of child abuse we have an additional obligation: if at any time while using social media an employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child with whom he or she comes into contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom the employee comes into contact has abused a child, that employee must immediately report the concern to the appropriate authorities, as well as to the appropriate division head and division counselor.