

**YESHIVA UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL
SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION USE POLICY
FOR STUDENTS**

Introduction and Scope

Yeshiva University High School for Girls and Yeshiva University High School for Boys (collectively “YUHS” or “the School”) understand that technology has brought us myriad new ways to communicate with each other. Social media and other electronic communications can serve as powerful tools to enhance education, communication and information-sharing with those inside and outside the YUHS community. While these forms of communication allow for many advances in learning and in creating connections between people, they can also encroach on an individual’s privacy and create questions of propriety. To clearly mark the appropriate boundaries and to protect and enhance the relationships between staff and students as well as the relationships among members of the student body, YUHS has adopted this Policy for the use of social media and electronic communications.

This Policy is directed at social media and electronic communication use by students, and interactions between staff and students, and among students. It applies to activity that occurs no matter where the staff member or student is physically located, whether inside or outside of School, and whether the technology used is personally or School owned.

This Policy does not apply to communications between a student and staff member acting in his/her capacity as parent, guardian or family member of the student.

Definitions

Social media is any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, such as “posting,” including but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, among others, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. **Professional social media** is a work-related social media activity that is YUHS or other employment-based (e.g., a faculty member establishing a Facebook page or Twitter account for his/her YUHS class or a class at another school). **Personal social media** is a non-work-related social media activity (e.g., a faculty member establishing a Facebook page or Twitter account for his/her personal use). For the purposes of this Policy, any social media account used for both personal and professional reasons, even if minimal, will be considered professional social media.

Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, all aspects of voice, video, and data communications, such as voicemail, email, fax, text messaging and internet access text messages, instant messages, games and other applications (“apps”), Chat services such as G-chat, Blackberry Messenger, Messenger I-chat and Face-Time and any other public or personal electronic communication or posting between two or more individuals.

Student Use of Social Media

Students should exercise the utmost caution when participating in any form of social media or online communication, both within the YUHS community and beyond. Students who participate in online interactions must remember that their posts reflect not just on themselves, but on the entire YUHS community and, as such, are subject to the same standards set forth in this Policy, YUHS' Anti-Harassment Policy and other applicable YUHS policies. When using social media sites, students should follow the guidelines set forth in this Policy to ensure that their participation is safe, responsible, appropriate and legal.

Students should be mindful that what is “private” in the digital world often has the possibility of becoming public, even without their knowledge or consent. They should carefully review the privacy settings on any social media and networking site they use. While YUHS does not actively monitor a student’s online social networking activities, any information coming to the attention of YUHS that it believes violates any of the School’s policies may prompt an investigation by YUHS which may include a review of the student’s online social networking activities. Any information discovered by YUHS may be used by it in determining its response, including appropriate punishment.

Student and Staff Interaction using Social Media

Students and staff should not communicate on *personal* social media sites or platforms. Examples of such communication include, but are not limited to, “friending,” “following,” “commenting,” “liking” and posting messages on *personal* social media sites. Similarly, “posting” or “tagging” photos or videos of students on any *personal* social media site or platform by staff members is prohibited.

Student and Staff Interaction Using Electronic Communication

All electronic communications between staff and students must be professional, acceptable in content to any reasonable person, and limited to information that is School-related and in compliance with YUHS' Anti-Harassment Policy and other applicable YUHS policies.

YUHS has provided to all students and staff a YUHS email address. All electronic communications between staff and students should only be sent using YUHS-issued email addresses and in general should only be sent between the hours of 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time). If a personal email account must be used, a copy of the communication must also be sent to the YUHS email addresses of the student and staff member. The staff member should also inform the Head of School of the communication.

Staff members seeking to communicate one-on-one with a student outside the classroom using Skype or similar technology must obtain prior approval of the Head of School or his/her designee.

Staff members should not call or text a student on the student’s personal cell phone and vice versa.

Exceptions may be made if (1) the text qualifies as a “mass text” which is defined as a text message sent to more than one student, and the message relates to a School-related communication, or (2) a specific situation arises where the staff member needs to communicate with the student for a School-related purpose and there is no reasonable alternative available. For example, a coach who has a last minute change in game time or location, a teacher leading a School trip who needs to communicate with a student during the trip, or the School secretary who needs to locate a particular student during School hours.

In addition, staff should not give their personal cell phone numbers to students except when a specific student will need to communicate with the staff member outside of School for a School matter and there is no other reasonable alternative available as in the examples above. Students given a personal cell phone number of a staff member should ONLY contact the staff member for the School-related purpose for which the phone number was given.

Additional Guidelines for Students Participating in Social Media and Electronic Communications

The following are additional guidelines to abide by in social media and electronic communications.

Always use appropriate “netiquette.” Netiquette is the social code of network communication including manners and etiquette in the internet, online and digital worlds. Adhering to appropriate “netiquette” ensures that all students and staff are treated with the respect and sensitivity necessary to foster a safe working and learning environment. Some important general rules are:

- **Treat others as you would like to be treated.** Students should be respectful of others in their communications, both private and public, and refrain from posting statements directed at others that are false, misleading, obscene, malicious, degrading, threatening, harassing, hateful, insulting, inflammatory, offensive, unlawful, fraudulent, discriminatory or invasive of the privacy of others.
- **Be careful about what you post or include in online or electronic communications.** Each student is personally responsible for what he/she posts or submits electronically. Postings made to social networking sites, even when privacy settings are used, often do not remain private or confidential and therefore could potentially be viewed by a large number of unintended individuals. Thus one should assume that all postings could be viewed by the School and staff, as well as other students, parents/guardians, alumni, law enforcement officials, college recruiters, summer programs and potential employers, and should self-edit content accordingly. One should also assume that postings that are made to social networking sites can thereafter exist in cyberspace forever. While steps can be taken to remove information, such steps do not preclude information from being copied, forwarded or posted on other sites.

- **Always use appropriate language.** Students should not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful language.
- **Be honest.** Make sure that you are honest and accurate. Never post any information or news that you do not believe to be true. If you make a mistake, you should correct it immediately. In addition, do not post information or news that you have been asked to keep private or confidential.
- **Protect Confidential and Personal Information.** Be careful not to post Confidential Information or Personal Information about yourself or others. “Confidential information” includes any information that is not public knowledge or, if disclosed, to an unauthorized individual, could result in harm to yourself or others. “Personal information” means information that can be used to identify an individual, such as an individual’s name, work or home address, email address, telephone or fax number, Social Security number (SSN) or other government identification number, background information, account numbers or license numbers.
- **Speak for yourself.** Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for YUHS unless you have been given specific prior written approval by the Head of School to do so. If YUHS is a subject of content that you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that your views do not represent those of YUHS. Students should not use School logos or marks unless authorized in writing in advance to do so by the Head of School.

Speak up and report inappropriate conduct. YUHS students are strongly encouraged to report to the Head of School, or to any other staff member with whom they are comfortable, any incident that is not consistent with this Policy, including the Guidelines, or any other YUHS policy. For example, any student who receives, or becomes aware that another student has received, an abusive, offensive, threatening or harassing email message or other such communication should immediately report that communication.

Know and follow the rules. Students (and their parents/guardians) should carefully read this Policy, including the Guidelines, to ensure that postings and communications are consistent with them. YUHS reserves the right to modify this Policy, including the Guidelines, at any time, and students must check periodically to ensure that they are familiar with any modifications or other changes to this Policy.

Students should also be sure that postings and communications do not violate any other applicable policies of the School, including but not limited to, YUHS’ Anti-Harassment Policy. The same rules and customs that guide behavior without computers and other tools apply when using them.

Discipline

Students who violate this Policy, including the Guidelines, may be subject to disciplinary action. The School reserves the right in its sole and absolute discretion to implement any disciplinary action, up to and including a student's dismissal from the School, in the event of any violation of this Policy.

Violations of this Policy can be reported to the Head of School at mtaubes@yuhsb.org.

Our students' safety is our utmost concern and responsibility. Therefore, in the event of an emergency, all students should feel comfortable contacting faculty, staff and administration in any convenient manner.