

**MKIS Student
Social Networking Policy**
Revision date: 24-Nov-08

Introduction

A social network is defined as: “A social structure made of nodes that are generally individuals or organizations. A social network represents relationships and flows between people, groups, organizations, animals, computers or other information/knowledge processing entities. The term itself was coined in 1954 by J. A. Barnes.¹” This document will use the term “social network” to refer to all cyberspace venues that fall in this category (e.g., wikis, blogs, FaceBook, MySpace, YouTube, etc.)

Social network sites are considered an extension of the classroom and therefore are subject to these guidelines as well as the rules and regulations of Mont’ Kiara International School. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive and do not cover every contingency. If you are ever in doubt about the appropriateness of an item - ask a parent or teacher.

Safe and Responsible Social Networking

The most basic guideline to remember when social networking is that the social network is an extension of your classroom. You should not post anything on a social network site that you would not say, write or show in your classroom. Use common sense, but if you are ever in doubt ask a teacher or parent whether or not what you are considering posting is appropriate. If you are going to err, err on the safe side. Here are some specific items to consider:

1. The use of social network sites is considered an extension of your classroom. Therefore, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate on a social network site. This includes, but is not limited to, profanity; racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks; personal attacks.
2. Social network sites are used primarily as learning tools, either as extensions of conversations and thinking outside of regular class time, or as the basis for beginning new classroom discussions. Either way, be sure to follow all rules and suggestions that are offered by your teachers regarding appropriate posting in your class.
3. Social network sites are about ideas – therefore, agree or disagree with the idea, not the person. Freedom of speech does not give you the right to be uncivil. Use constructive criticism and use evidence to support your position. Read others’ posts carefully – often in the heat of the moment you may think that a person is saying one thing, when really they are not.
4. Try not to generalize. Sentences that start with words like “All” (e.g., “All teachers,” “All administrators,” “All liberals,” “All conservatives”) are typically going to be too general.

¹ http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/s/social_network.html

5. Social network sites are public. Whatever you post on a social network site can be seen by anyone and everyone on the Internet. Even if you delete a post or comment, it has often already been archived elsewhere on the web. Do not post anything that you wouldn't want your parents, your best friend, your worst enemy, or a future employer to see.
6. Social network site safely. NEVER post personal information on the web (including, but not limited to, last names, personal details including address or phone numbers, or photographs). (Note: The advice to not use your last name is for your protection. Teachers may choose to use their last names for their posts/comments.) Do not, under any circumstances, agree to meet someone you have met over the Internet.
7. Because your login to the social networking site (e.g., Blogger) is typically linked to your profile, any personal social network site you create in class is directly linked to your class social network site and must follow these social networking guidelines. In addition to following the information above about not sharing too much personal information (in your profile or in any posts/comments you make), you need to realize that anywhere you use that login links back to your class social network site. Therefore, anywhere that you use that login (posting to a separate personal social network site, commenting on someone else's social network site, etc.), you need to treat the same as a school social network site and follow these guidelines. You should also monitor any comments you receive on your personal social network site and - if they are inappropriate - delete them. If you would like to post or comment somewhere and not follow these guidelines, you need to create a separate login to the social networking site so that it does not connect back to your class social network site. You may not use that login from school computers. We would still recommend you follow the portion of these guidelines that address your personal safety (e.g., not posting personal information, etc.)
8. Linking to web sites from your social network site or social network site comments in support of your argument is an excellent idea. But never link to something without reading the entire article to make sure it is appropriate for a school setting.
9. Use of quotations in a social network site is acceptable. Make sure that you follow the proper formatting and cite the source of the quote.
10. Pictures may be inserted into a social network site but are not recommended. If a picture is used make sure that the image is appropriate for use in a school document and copyright laws are followed. Do not post any images that can identify yourself or others. Use names only if necessary and never include family (last) names.
11. Student social network venues that are not, or cannot, be moderated by an MKIS teacher (e.g. FaceBook, MyBlog, YouTube, etc.) will not be used at MKIS to support school related activities. Moderated in this context means that a person or persons has / have been assigned to review / approve all content submitted prior to final posting and only said person(s) has been given "moderator" permissions / capabilities to edit / post content.

Successful Social Networkers

The following are some traits of successful social networkers:

- Their posts (or comments) are well written. This includes not only good content, but – because these are school-related social network sites – also follows writing conventions including spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Their posts (or comments) are responsive. They respond to other people’s ideas – whether it is a post by a teacher, a comment by a student, or an idea elsewhere on the Internet. The power of social network sites is in their connectedness – they are connected to a larger community of ideas. Participate in that community.
- Their posts (or comments) include textual references to support their opinions. Adding quotes or links to other works strengthens their response.
- They participate frequently. To be part of the dialogue, you have to participate fully and consistently.
- They are respectful of others. It’s okay to disagree; it’s not okay to be disagreeable. Be respectful of others and their opinions, and be civil when you disagree.