

4.004 - Use of Social Media

Scope

These guidelines apply to all Clerc Center employees, contract staff, temporary staff, and volunteers.

Guidelines

All Clerc Center stakeholders who use social media technology for professional purposes must do so in a safe and responsible manner. Because the line between professional and personal responsibility can be difficult to determine, this document also provides employees with guidance for use of personal social media.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Use of social media includes but is not limited to posting, commenting, following, liking, or sending or replying to a message. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Google+, and Flickr.

- Professional social media is school-based and/or work-related, and may involve employee-to-student communication, and can be either a closed/private site that are limited to a specific and small group of people or a public site. Examples include a teacher establishing a blog for his/her class (closed/private) or a school-sponsored class Facebook page (public).
- Personal social media is non-work-related and, subject to certain exceptions noted in the guidelines, does not involve employee-to-student communications. Examples are personal Twitter or Facebook accounts for personal use.

Professional Social Media Use

Clerc Center employees should not use their personal email address for professional social media activities or engage in personal communications when using professional social media or email accounts.

- Employees should treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or a professional workplace. The same standards expected in professional settings are expected on professional social media sites. If a particular type of behavior is inappropriate in the classroom or in the workplace, then that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media site.

- Professional social media communication must comply with existing regulations, policies, and applicable laws, including, but not limited to, prohibitions on the disclosure of confidential information and prohibitions on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory, or threatening language.
- In the situations of a professional or educational context or reason, Clerc Center employees should use their Gallaudet University email account or school videophone to communicate with students or parents. This provision regarding professional electronic communications is strictly limited to topics of a professional nature and should directly relate to the employee's work.
- Similarly, to support distinguishing roles and boundaries, employees who are also parents or guardians of students enrolled at or who apply to either KDES or MSSD should use their personal email account when contacting or corresponding with Clerc Center teachers or staff about their children.

Professional Social Media – Internal Audiences Only

- Clerc Center employees are required to obtain their SLT Level Supervisor's approval before setting up a private/closed professional social media presence.
- The employee's SLT Level Supervisor must be given co-administrator rights or access to the account.
- The SLT Level Supervisor is responsible for maintaining a list of all private/closed professional social media accounts within their departments or school.

Professional Social Media – Public

- If the social media presence will be open to or viewable by any external audience, including parents, then approval from the Director of Public Relations and Communications is also required, in addition to the approval from the employee's SLT Level Supervisor.
- The director of Public Relations and Communications along with Clerc Center SLT Level Supervisor, or their designees, must have administrator rights or access to the public professional social media accounts established by Clerc Center employees.
- The director of Public Relations and Communications is responsible for maintaining a list of all public professional social media accounts within the Clerc Center.
- No personally identifiable student information may be posted on professional social media sites, including student photographs, if the student's parents have opted to have this type of directory information withheld. To check on parental permissions, contact the front desk of the appropriate school or the director of Public Relations and Communications.
- Affiliated social media sites of organizations or associations established to primarily serve the Clerc Center community that are available online to external audiences are also expected to comply with all parental wishes regarding the withholding of publishing any personally identifiable directory information about students.

Monitoring of Professional Social Media Sites

- Employees using professional social media have no expectation of privacy with regard to their use of such media. The Clerc Center will monitor professional social media sites to protect the school community.
- SLT Level Supervisors, or their designees, are responsible for monitoring their employees' professional social media sites. The monitoring responsibilities include reviewing the professional social media sites on a regular basis to identify any questionable communications or behavior.
- SLT Level Supervisors, or their designees, and the director of Public Relations and Communications may create, modify, remove, disable, and otherwise administer professional social media sites.
- The default setting for comments on professional social media sites should be turned off. Decisions to allow comments will be made on a case-by-case basis by the SLT Level Supervisors, or their designees, and the director of Public Relations and Communications.
- It is a recommended practice for professional social media sites to be private networks, unless there is a specific educational need for the site to be a public network.
- SLT Level Supervisors, or their designees, should maintain a detailed log of all reported non-compliant communications.

Personal Social Media Use

Clerc Center employees should not communicate on personal social media sites (“friending,” “following,” “commenting,” and posting messages) or communicate with students through personal electronic communications (personal email and text messaging) with students who are currently enrolled at the Clerc Center. (Student Life staff should use the official dorm pagers—mssdgirlsldorm@gallaudet.edu and mssdboysdorm@gallaudet.edu—when communicating with students directly.)

- Clerc Center employees who use social media for personal purposes should remove current Clerc Center students, subject to the exceptions listed below, from those sites.
- If an employee receives a “friend” request from a current student to connect or communicate through a personal social media site, they should refuse the request.
- Clerc Center employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions.

- The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites is prohibited.

Exceptions are as follows: (a) communication with relatives, and (b) if an emergency situation requires such communication, in which case the employee should notify his/her supervisor of the contact as soon as possible. Employees should inform the principal/supervisor in writing of any familial relationships with students.

Students who are “family friends” or “close friends of family members” are not family, so professional workplace expectations apply.

Related Policy, Guidelines, Procedure, and/or Form

Procedure

4.004.01 - Requesting a Professional Social Media Account or Site

<i>Refer Questions To:</i>	<i>Director, Public Relations and Communications</i>
<i>Approved By:</i>	<i>Senior Leadership Team</i>
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<i>Document Address:</i>	<i>www.gallaudet.edu/documents/clerc/handbook/4.004-UseofSocialMedia.pdf</i>