



Guidelines for Social Media use for candidates admitted to the Teacher Preparation Program

Personal communication via social media platforms are held accountable by the laws and regulations that govern personal liability for traditional types of communication. When posting on social media, your statements should not indicate that you are speaking on behalf of Southwest Minnesota State University or the School of Education, particularly if you are employed by SMSU. You are responsible for what you post online, whether it is on your own site or on the sites of others. Student employees may want to consider adding a disclaimer to their social media accounts noting that the thoughts and views expressed are their own and are not representative of the views of SMSU or of SMSU's School of Education.

SMSU's School of Education encourages all teacher candidates to use established processes in directing complaints or concerns about coursework, faculty, or clinical experiences to the Chairperson of the School of Education and/or the Director of Clinical Experiences in Education. This policy is not intended to govern or restrict your personal presence online or to otherwise restrict your right to free speech.

General guidelines for social media use:

1. Know when and what to share, and when not to engage. Be careful when discussing topics where emotions may run high (e.g. religious and political topics), and show respect for the opinions of others.
2. It is usually best not to engage or respond to those who are posting negative comments; "two wrongs do not make a right".
3. Be careful not to post private or personal information about professors, other candidates, or mentor teachers or students in your field experiences.
4. Remember that images, video, and other forms of media are included in copyright protections; all images and videos that are not your own should include information that credits the source.
5. Keep in mind that all E-12 students are covered by privacy protections; images/video of students requires permission from all parents/guardians.
6. Remember that your cooperating teachers, students in your clinical experiences, and their parents/guardians, along with the administrators in our partnering host schools, will be looking online to find out more information about you as a teacher candidate in the classroom. Everything that you have ever posted, along with all that has been posted by others and tags you, will be seen by this group of stakeholders. Guard your online presence carefully, and make sure it represents the 'you' that you want the world to see!

Consequences of inappropriate use of social media:

Violation of these guidelines may result in a delay/reassignment of a clinical experience such as pre-student teaching or student teaching that could impact your timely completion of the program, or even in removal from SMSU's Teacher Preparation Program for serious offenses. Candidates may be placed on a growth plan if warranted.