



Social Media Guidelines

Social media is defined as accessible online networks and communities designed to allow users to easily interact and share information. Examples include but are not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Tumblr, blogs, etc.

Social media provide powerful tools for communication – to both share information about our programs and engage in conversation with each other and outside parties. These guidelines outline expectations for communicating online on behalf of Wyoming 4-H program.

Why do we need social media guidelines? Social media is an integral part of everyday communications, and a vast majority of our staff, members and volunteers are already using these platforms in a personal and/or professional capacity.

For an organization serving youth, social media is of great importance, as 81 percent of all teens aged 12-17 use social media sites and 95 percent regularly use the Internet ([Pugh Internet & American Life Project, May 2013](#)). Guidelines are intended to empower relevant parties to utilize social media effectively and responsibly, in the best interest of themselves, their clubs, programs and 4-H.

General Guidelines

- In all instances, 4-H members and volunteers must always adhere to the Wyoming 4-H Code of Conduct and represent 4-H in the best possible way.
- Most social media networks have a minimum age for use, and in most cases this is 13 and older. No member under this age should administer or participate in a county or club 4-H social media account.
- County and club social media accounts should only be used for the purposes of sharing information about and engaging conversation around those programs and related items. They should not be used for personal or commercial purposes.
- County-level accounts should be administered by a staff member, though he or she may seek assistance from trusted volunteers.
- Club accounts may be started with the approval the County Educator. A county staff member and an adult volunteer leader must be an account administrator, or in the case of open groups, made a group member. Account administrators are responsible for monitoring the sites for questions, issues that need a response and, where applicable, to remove inappropriate content.
- Administrators and participants must always follow the policies and regulations of each social media network. Additionally, social media posts must respect copyright and trademark, and, of course, may not violate any federal, state or local law.

- Be cautious of third-party applications that can access information from social media accounts. Be certain that these applications are safe and understand fully what information they can pull from your account.
- If linking to a website outside of 4-H or the University of Wyoming, know what that website is and how linking to it may be construed. Be sure that the website is safe, credible and does not contain offensive content.
- A plan should be developed for when and how social media accounts will be updated and monitored. Only establish accounts you believe you have the resources to maintain. If an account is not updated for weeks or months at a time, it reflects poorly on the program and has clearly fallen out of use, at which point it should be removed.
- Always be honest about who you are or who you represent. A 4-H account need not personally identify the person(s) administering the account, but individuals should never pretend to be someone else.
- As with all forms of communication, leaders should not have direct one on one contact with 4-H members. Private messages on social sites (Facebook messages, Twitter direct messages, etc.) between a youth member and an adult should always include another adult.
- Above all, be smart and safe. Do not share content that is profane, obscene, discriminatory or otherwise offensive. Do not share personally identifying information about individuals beyond general information such as their names. On both personal and 4-H accounts, know your privacy and security settings and be cautious about clicking on suspect links.
- Staff and Volunteer social networking sites should remain personal in nature and should not be used for 4-H related purposes.

Guidelines for Using Photos and Logos

- Use of 4-H and the University of Wyoming names and logos should only be used in established, approved manners and should never be used to promote unaffiliated causes and products, or political parties or candidates. County or state program staff should be contacted for directions on using these names and logos in an appropriate way.
- Photos that include identifiable individuals should only be used with a valid photo release.
- Do not use the names of 4-H members when posting photos.
- Photo tagging is not permitted. Youth or adults may tag themselves.
- Do not post copyrighted material. This includes videos with copyrighted music.

Guidelines for Facebook

- County programs that wish to establish a Facebook presence must use Facebook Pages, which are designed to be public-facing and open. Facebook, which requires that businesses and organizations use this type of account, has a [step-by-step guide for creating a page and best practices](#).
 - County pages should be administered by the County 4-H Educator, and it is advised that at least one more staff member have manager-level access.
 - Page managers are strongly urged to include page policies that encourage open discussion but delineate the types of user posts that are unacceptable.
- Clubs may use Facebook Pages if they desire to have a promotional and/or public-engagement presence. If the club members wish to have a group for more internal discussions, they may use [Facebook Groups](#) (facebook.com/about/groups). In either case, the page or group must first be approved by the County Educator and an adult volunteer leader and both of whom should be made an administrators or group members along with the club leader and designated member administrators.
 - Club members should discuss and agree upon privacy settings in advance in the case of a Facebook Group.

Twitter Guidelines

- As with any other social media platform, a county account should be administered by the County 4-H Educator and at least one other county staff member or volunteer should be able to access the account.
- Know who and what you are retweeting. Be sure you are not endorsing a statement that is not related to or aligned with your program, contains profanity or is otherwise inappropriate. Twitter user names can sometimes be profane or offensive, so look closely at who you respond to or retweet from a 4-H account.
- Twitter is a powerful tool for connecting with people and sharing and receiving information quickly. To be safe, use strong passwords, be cautious about the third-party applications linked to your account and be sure you trust the links you click on.

Other Platforms

- Social media is rapidly evolving. Each site is different, offering different opportunities, audiences and challenges. Before starting an account, develop a plan for your goals, why this platform will help you achieve those goals and how you plan to administer it. Do not start an account if you do not believe you have the time and resources to effectively maintain it.
- Though each site is different, following established best practices along with the guidelines herein will help your social media presence reach its goals effectively and responsibly.

The policies above were adapted from the Penn State Fact Sheet 29, Pennsylvania 4-H Social Media Guidelines.