
Interest Topic Handout: Boy Scouts of America

Social Media Guidelines Overview

Source: www.scouting.org/Home/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia.aspx

Note: It is not the goal of this document to provide a step-by-step “how to” on creating and using the specific features of social media channels. Such guides already exist and can be found elsewhere. Additionally, social media changes regularly, so this document reflects the current guidelines as determined by the BSA and is subject to modifications and amendments from time to time as required.

INTRODUCTION

Online social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made it possible for virtually anyone with an Internet connection to create and be part of online communities where people can discuss Scouting and share stories, photos, videos, and other types of media. Although using social media is not a Scouting activity, their use to connect with others interested in Scouting can be a very positive experience. But the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility. For that reason, the Boy Scouts of America has developed guidelines to help you navigate the use of social media channels. These guidelines are a complement to the BSA’s existing Youth Protection policies and training.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH PROTECTION

- First, everyone should review and strictly adhere to the terms of service and existing guidelines outlined by each individual social media channel (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).
- As is true for participation in Scouting activities, all Scouts and adult leaders should abide by the guidelines outlined in the Scout Oath and Law when participating in social networking.
- As with a Scouting activity, safety and Youth Protection should be a key focus.
- Staying true to the commitment of the BSA to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off, should always be at the forefront of any considerations where social media usage is concerned.
- To help ensure that all communication on social media channels remains positive and safe, these channels must be public, and all communication on or through them must be public.
- This enables administrators to monitor all communication and help ensure there is no inappropriate communication between adult leaders and Scouts or between Scouts themselves.

- Therefore, no private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invite-only YouTube channels) are acceptable in helping to administer the Scouting program.
- Abiding by the “two deep” leadership policy that governs all Scouting activities also applies to use of social media. As it relates to social media, two-deep leadership means there should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging (Google Messenger, AIM, etc.), or other similar messaging features provided through social media sites.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

For practical considerations, the BSA expects adults intending to use social media on behalf of Scouting to adhere to the following:

- Social media must be monitored. A qualified staff member or volunteer should have the responsibility of monitoring social media channels daily, and backup administrators/monitors should be designated so there is no gap in the monitoring.
- Talk to your audiences and let them talk to and about you. By posting content on a consistent schedule, you can tell your story and encourage conversations in the community.
- Social media takes a thick skin. Negative conversations are happening already, but now you have a voice in the conversation. Don’t delete negative comments unless they violate the terms laid out in the BSA Social Media Digital Contract.
- Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts if response is warranted. Some negative comments do not require a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should temper if and how you respond.
- Be Scout-like. When disagreeing with others’ opinions, remain appropriate and polite.
- Build trust by being open and transparent. Share information and what the challenges and opportunities are for Scouting in your community.

FACEBOOK

- Share with the participants that Cub Scouting has its very own official Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/officialcubscouts/>
- Facebook is a wonderful way to form online communities where groups of people can gather to have conversations and share information. Of course, creating and maintaining a Facebook page for your unit is a big responsibility and should not be entered into lightly.
- It may be valuable to think of a Facebook page as a little like a pack meeting that is always open, always going on, and where members of the public may drop by and watch or participate at any time of day or night.
- But it's also easy to see how, if left unstructured or unattended by Scout leaders, this never-ending meeting could easily become a problem.
- When considering whether or not Facebook might be a good option for your unit, it is important to remember that Facebook requires all users to be at least 13 years of age. Before creating a Facebook page, you should educate yourself about what Facebook is and how it is used, and familiarize yourself with its terms of service.
- In addition, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the BSA. At least one of these page administrators should be a BSA employee, a local council employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training. All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the use of the messaging capabilities of Facebook.

Starting a Pack Facebook Page

- If you already have a personal Facebook page, after logging in go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/create> and select either "Company, Organization or Institution" or "Cause or Community." Next, follow the Facebook instructions to create a public fan page. You may also choose to have a closed group page where you invite members of your pack to join.

Some Facebook Do's and Don'ts

Do create multiple administrators.	Do check your page frequently.
Do maintain "two-deep leadership" online.	Don't post last names of youth members.
Do post consistently.	Don't share a Scout's identifying information.
Do encourage interactivity.	Don't create a fan page that you can't maintain.
Do conform to the Scout Oath and Law.	Don't say anything online you wouldn't say to a person's face.

For more information on BSA social media guidelines and Internet safety, please visit www.scouting.org/Home/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia.aspx