

## Illinois PTA Social Media Guidelines



So you think your PTA is ready to jump into the world of social media communications? It can be used as a great tool to get word to members in a very short amount of time. However, setting up these tools requires some commitment by volunteers to make it successful and useful for both the PTA board and PTA members.

Below you will find some suggested ways to start the use of social media in your local unit. These are guidelines to help you navigate the social media world that is now a norm in many households. It will answer some questions you may have about using social media to communicate with your members or “fans”.

First things first:

- Your local PTA leadership should approve the creation of a local unit page on any social media site, such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, etc.
- Facebook pages should be created as an association/organization fan page, not as a personal page or a group. Facebook offers options for organizations that should be followed to allow for members to be “fans” rather than “friends”.
- You must use the PTA name in capital letters & in accordance with the guidelines for use under the registered trademark (go to [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) to search for how to use the logo correctly).
- Be sure to research the option settings you want to use. Your PTA should agree on how the page should be used – for example, will you allow anyone to post comments, notes and photos, or will you limit how that is done?
- **RESPECT PRIVACY:** In postings, never add photos of children without parent permission and NEVER tag children by name, even if you have permission to post the photo
- Determine your page “voice”. Decide who will be responsible for monitoring the page to ensure that the posts support the mission & purposes of PTA. It should not be used as a forum to attack others or post inappropriate material.
- Consider limiting who can post. You should have more than one person with administrative permission so that if one volunteer is unable to monitor or post, another can. However, having too many people with access to post can lead to potential chaos.

So you have your page...now what?

- Illinois PTA suggests having "rules" posted on your page so that people know what will & will not be allowed by your local leadership. For example:
  - Facebook comments cannot be used as ad space (explicit or implied). Do not endorse, promote or solicit on behalf of a business, product or service. The PTA's 501 (c)(3) status prohibits us from endorsing specific businesses or services.
  - Comments must remain civil, cordial and relevant.
  - Comments will remain if they are on topic and contribute to the conversation. They will be deleted if they contain or link to abusive material, profanity, personal attacks, spam, or promote a business or service.
- Illinois PTA suggests also using relevant questions, polls, and sharing general parenting and education content to boost engagement.
  - Ask simple questions and share articles of interest to get people chatting on Facebook
  - Be sure to keep the page active. Do not leave it sitting for weeks. Daily input and information makes the page useful and relevant. Set up a team of volunteers to make sure you are interacting daily or at the very least every other day (people who already use Facebook regularly are ideal volunteers for this job!).
- Remember that not all your parents are on Facebook. Look at your school population before you take away other communication tools and replace them with Facebook or Twitter. Do not assume announcements are received and do not make big decisions based on the feedback of your Facebook fans, alone.
- Be sure to spread the word to follow you on Facebook or Twitter! If they do not know you are there, they won't be a fan! Be sure to remind members in all your communications that you are on Facebook or to follow you on Twitter. This a great supplemental tool for all your existing communication outlets.

If you have questions regarding social media usage and/or how to utilize your page, please feel free to contact Jen DeFranco, Illinois PTA Membership/Marketing Director for additional information. [jtdefranco@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jtdefranco@sbcglobal.net)

REMINDER: Don't forget to "like" Illinois PTA on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. You can always share links posted on the Illinois PTA page, on your local PTA page, to spread great articles, reminders and education information!

