

Every year, teachers and principals are disciplined or have their contracts terminated because of poor online behaviour. Your professional reputation is your most valuable asset.

Educators are held to a higher standard than most professionals, so be a professional in public at all times. You may be disciplined for off-duty conduct.

If you are a teacher candidate, do not wait until you're employed to clean up your social media accounts. Potential employers are watching your online behaviour now.

If you have questions or need help, contact:

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Online Safety for MTS members

Protect your teaching career
and reputation

Your professional reputation is your most valuable asset. **Protect it always.**





Model professional and ethical online behavior

- You are a professional, not a friend to students. Crossing boundaries can be perceived as inappropriate or even grooming behaviour. Good intentions can ruin a career.
- Do not use email, texting or messaging apps to develop a rapport with students. Don't text students without parental permission and then only during regular school hours or approved working hours—and only in relation to school activities.
- Get permission, including signed releases from parents or guardians before posting pictures of students, school or classroom activities, or information about students, families or colleagues.

- Ensure your students are not exposed to inappropriate material or communications. This can lead to criminal charges. Do not destroy the material in question: you risk exaggeration by students.
- Do not post inappropriate pictures; revealing selfies; racist, homophobic or transphobic memes; embarrassing candids, effusive references to alcohol or cannabis, or any posts with profane language or gestures.
- Teachers are known by the online company they keep. Do not follow or interact with questionable accounts. If your students can see you're following a highly inappropriate account, it could result in discipline including firing or non-renewal of contract.
- Never vent about colleagues, students or parents online. Remember, screenshots are easy to take. Unprofessional comments can lead to official complaints against you.
- Create separate personal and professional profiles on social media. Use different names for each account. Resist friending or interacting with students on your personal accounts.
- Know and follow your board's policies when it comes to using social media, divisional computers and equipment. If the equipment you're using belongs to the employer, nothing remains private. Misperceptions of your activity may lead to allegations, investigations and a forensic audit.
- Keep printed and electronic copies of all significant emails.

Commenting

- When leaving comments on social media posts or news media sites, do not engage in personal attacks, hate speech or negative comments based on race, ethnicity, creed, national origin, citizenship, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, homophobia, transphobia, disability, marital status, age. Dog-whistles are out, so is profanity, spam, trolling and using asterisks to camouflage bad language.

