4.20 KCTCS Social Media Policy

The use of social media has become an integral part of our society and culture. As such it has begun to transition from an after-work social channel to an important customer relations and educational tool that has affected much of our professional day-to-day. Social media channels are powerful communications tools that can significantly impact professional and organizational reputations and should not be taken lightly. To promote the successful use of social media communications the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) has developed and will continue to update, the following policy to assist in the protection of personal and professional reputations and student safety while participating in social media. This also includes examples of some best practices for individual and college accounts as well as recommendations for posting in social media communities. Since the web is constantly growing and evolving, the resources provided below will continue to grow as needed by KCTCS and federal requirements. For more information and assistance with social media, please contact the KCTCS System Office Marketing and Communications Department.

A public KCTCS web property is one that is available via the public internet and which generally does not restrict access to content. Examples include college websites or official KCTCS presences on social networking websites.

4.20.1 Using Social Media

KCTCS officially utilizes Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn for social media communications; however, this policy also includes but is not limited to other social media sites, such as, MySpace, Tumblr, Flicker, Vimeo and others. Your conduct in non-KCTCS environments may also reflect on KCTCS and is governed by the same policies and procedures in cases where information, services, or materials belonging to KCTCS are involved. Where KCTCS information is not involved, your behavior is governed by statute and, we hope, by common courtesy.

Below are highlighted additional KCTCS policies that must be followed when utilizing official KCTCS social media sites or when having identified yourself as a KCTCS employee or student.

- Information and Information Use Technology Policy – Administrative Policy 4.2.5.
- KCTCS Web Services Policy – Administrative Policy 4.19.
- Harassment-Free Workplace Policy – Administrative Policy 3.3.1.
- KCTCS Students Administrative Policy 4.20.3.

4.20.2 KCTCS Faculty and Staff

4.20.2.1 As an Official KCTCS Representative

1. Follow the proper channels. Be aware that official communications from KCTCS to outside audiences are governed by KCTCS policy. This includes the creation of social networking
sites and profiles. You must submit a request to Marketing and Public Relations before creating a social networking site or profile in the name of KCTCS or its associated entities. You may not create an official KCTCS web presence without approval.

2. Abide by relevant policies. Remember that KCTCS, its colleges, and other associated entities are all governed by approved standards and procedures when it comes to the web.

3. Consider your resources. Social networking is a potentially powerful tool for recruitment, advocacy, and communications. Since most social networking tools are free, it’s tempting to jump right in. But remember that there are many official communications channels at KCTCS; and they all require dedicated, talented employees to maintain. Assigning employees to manage social networking sites may not be the best use of their time, especially if your public website or other basic marketing infrastructure is not where it needs to be. Consider taking care of the basics first.

4. Remember quality. If you have an approved site, you are representing KCTCS in an official capacity online. That means you have a responsibility to ensure all information is accurate, is maintained in a timely fashion, and is well written.

5. Protect confidential information and proprietary information. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about KCTCS, students, employees, or alumni. Employees must still follow all federal requirements such as FERPA, KCTCS technology use policy, and Web policy when communicating online.

Academic speech will be protected in all cases, but shall not be assumed to supersede relevant policies or legal requirements.

4.20.2.2 As an Individual…

1. Employees are personally responsible for content they publish on blogs, wikis, or other user-generated media on personal social media sites.

2. If you post content on a non-KCTCS site that relates to KCTCS, follow these guidelines:
   a. Make sure the content is accurate. Reporting inaccurate information about KCTCS, even on a non-KCTCS web property, can lead to disciplinary action.
   b. Make sure the content is appropriate. You have an individual right to free speech, but be sure your speech does not defame or libel your fellow employees or KCTCS. Be sure it does not create a threatening or harassing environment for a colleague. If you have a problem with a KCTCS employee, consider addressing that problem with your supervisor, Human Resources, or other formal channels.
   c. Make sure the content is public. Proprietary KCTCS information is not appropriate to share. This includes student information (governed by FERPA), security, safety, or any other information that is internal to KCTCS. Information that is not publicly available, but is subject to publication should be requested through a formal open records request to KCTCS. You do not have the authority as an employee to publish KCTCS information without permission.
3. Use a disclaimer on content published to any website where reference is made to the work you do or subjects associated with KCTCS. Make it clear the postings represent personal opinions and do not represent the positions, strategies, or opinions of KCTCS.

4. Respect copyright laws.

5. Do not cite or reference information from others without consent from that party.

6. If you have identified yourself as a member of KCTCS ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues and students.

KCTCS has a long-established policy of respecting the intellectual property (copyright) of others and of protecting its own intellectual property. Just as we take care in our physical-world activities to avoid infringement of intellectual property rights and to provide proper attribution of such rights, so we must in our activities in social networking environments.

4.20.2.3 Best Practices for Social Media

When posting on behalf of a KCTCS unit or a KCTCS college, the following should be considered.

Think Twice: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Please consider what effect your post could have on both the poster and the college. Search engines can turn up social media results years after they have been posted, and comments can be forwarded and copied.

Check Twice: Please be sure all posts contain accurate information, are grammatically correct, and do not contain any misspellings.

Be Polite: Remember that social media is an open platform and posts should encourage active discussions, even of opposing ideas. Don’t post any material that is profane, libelous, obscene, threatening, abusive, harassing, hateful, defamatory, or embarrassing. If someone else posts any such material, please remove it and notify that person that such behavior is not tolerated on KCTCS social media channels.

Listen: Observe before you begin posting. Take notice of what people are talking about and what they are interested, then add value to the discussion by posting on similar topics with helpful or interesting information.

4.20.2.4 KCTCS Social Media Approval Procedure

For social media websites that represent KCTCS, the colleges, programs and initiatives in an official capacity as defined above, the following approval procedure is applicable:

A. Site Administrator’s must submit a completed Social Media Needs Assessment Form before creating the social media web entity. This form is provided by the College Public Relations Office or the System Office Department of Marketing and Communications.
B. After completing the Social Media Needs Assessment Form, the social media page administrator must gain approval in writing from the College Public Relations Office or the System Office Department of Marketing and Communications.

C. Social media profile images must follow KCTCS brand guidelines for logo usage and any other applicable standards (i.e., color palette, fonts, etc.). Theses must be approved by the System Office Department of Marketing and Communications before the webpage can be published.

The System Office Department of Marketing and Communications reserves the right to overrule Social Media Page permissions granted at the college level.

- Facebook Pages
- Twitter Channels
- Flicker Accounts
- YouTube Channels

4.20.2.5 Encounters with Inappropriate Behavior

KCTCS strives to create an environment that is safe and comfortable for all. However, KCTCS cannot control and is not responsible for the activity inside virtual worlds or within social networking environments. If you are in a virtual environment in conjunction with your work/studies at KCTCS and you encounter behavior that would not be acceptable inside KCTCS, you should “walk away” or even sign out of the virtual environment. You should report abuse to the service provider and the appropriate KCTCS employee. And as always, if you encounter an inappropriate situation in a virtual environment which you believe to be related to or associated with KCTCS, you should bring this to the attention of the appropriate KCTCS employees, as well as your service provider.

4.20.3 KCTCS Students

Social media at KCTCS are primarily web and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussion information. These include social networks, wikis, social media and virtual worlds. Online social media enables college students to share insights, express their opinions and communicate information through online conversations. It is important for students who choose to participate in these conversations to understand what is recommended, expected and required when they discuss KCTCS-related topics, whether at work or on their own time.
These are the official guidelines for participation in any of KCTCS’ official social media pages/sites. We expect all students who participate in social media on behalf of KCTCS to follow these guidelines. The guidelines will continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge. Currently these guidelines include the following social media:

- Social media and social networking tools (both official KCTCS social media and social media external to KCTCS), such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and any additional social media and social networking tools as they become available.
- Blackboard Learn social learning tools for connecting and collaborating with others in courses at your school and at other schools with Blackboard Learn.
- Blogs (both official college-side KCTCS blogs and blogs external to KCTCS).
- Wikis, such as Wikipedia and any other site, where text can be posted.
- Virtual worlds.

Social media can help KCTCS students connect in positive ways. However, there are aspects students should remember when communicating through social media:

- Assume that anything you post is or will become public and that your post may remain on the web and accessible to family, friends, college admission committees and employers far into the future.
- Posting personal identifying information, such as your home address, current location, phone number, birth date or Social Security number may lead to the theft of your identify or other criminal activity.
- Disclosing out-of-town travel or other information may allow someone with a criminal intent to know your locations or plans.
- KCTCS logos or trade names may not be used without prior written permission of the college.
- KCTCS encourages social media users to interact with each other in a respectful and meaningful way.
- KCTCS and its colleges are not responsible for comments or wall postings made by visitors to its official social media channels and reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to screen and remove any content it deems inappropriate, including:
o Any content that harasses, abuses, threatens, or in any other way violates the rights of others.

o Any content that violates the Terms of Services and/or policies set forth by the social media channel being used.

o Any posts containing links.

o Any posts containing commercial content whose primary purpose is to sell a product, a service, or other such practices.

Please be aware that violation of these six (6) guidelines may result in disciplinary action.