



# Social Media for PTO/PFO's

Presented by: Danette Melchionne  
and Michelle Passaro

**"It is today that we must create  
the world of the future"**

**– Eleanor Roosevelt**

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# Benefits of Social Media

- Drive Awareness
- Increase Communication
- Energize Your Audience
- **Expand Your Audience**



# Tips for Social Media

To quote a well-known advertising campaign, “**Get out there.**” Social media can be easy to use, and most sites don’t charge a penny!



## 1. Follow Policies and Guidelines

Find out if your school or district has any policies or guidelines regarding employee use of social media. Make sure everything you do online is in keeping with these and other pertinent policies and procedures, as well as state and federal laws or regulations governing school personnel and acceptable use of technology.

## 2. Start With One Site...

Facebook, Twitter, WordPress, Website... Pick one and start posting! Update posts/reposts as often as you can – having new information regularly brings people back.

## 3. An Extension of Your Communication

Use social media outlets as an extension current communication. It’s an additional way to share important information with your community. Your main site (along with any others you add) should include your school logo, as well as links to your organization’s website(s) and any social media sites. **This is also a great way to save on paper waste!**

# Ways To Use Social Media

## 1. For Your PTO

Create a social media/web committee; ask volunteers to set up various sites for your group and keep it fresh with upcoming programs, meeting notices, etc. Make sure several people have access to add/remove content. Maybe even one of your parents is involved with social media for work – ask around!

## 2. For Reminders

Attendance down? Blast reminders – 3 weeks, 2 weeks, 1 week, couple days, day before, day of! Once the meeting is over be diligent about getting information from the meeting out to those who were not able to attend or results of the event. Create areas of your site to house meeting minutes, handouts, etc.

Send quick updates and reminders to parents with Twitter or Facebook. Use it for fundraiser product pickups, signup form deadlines, countdowns for big events, etc.

## 3. For Fun

Post a “photo of the week” (be conscious of keeping within any photo restrictions/guidelines your school may have) on your blog, Facebook page, or Twitter feed; include a caption that shares info about what is shown from an event.



# What Should You Post?

- School news, meetings and events
- Sports scores
- Thanks (and photos) of volunteers & their work
- Appreciation to teachers
- Thanks to corporate sponsors (use their @address)
- Local news/events, parenting & education content
- Legislative updates
- Calls to Action: Volunteer, Donate, Vote, Join
- Results of fundraisers & elections

# Social Media Bylaws

Some PTO's are now adding into their bylaws policies about social media. What you may actually want is a COMMUNICATIONS code of conduct. "Social Media" is the big thing now, but the fact is - when it comes to trying to write policy - a person could make most of the same mistakes in a newspaper ad, letter to the editor, mailing, even a phone call. You may want to write your policy to be broad enough to cover all the bases, including social media.





# Social Media Do's

- **Be Professional** – Talk the way you would talk to real people in professional situations.
- **Be Courteous** – Be sure to listen & ask questions.
- **Be Accurate** – Check your facts before you post and provide supporting sources if necessary.
- **Be Useful** – Add content because you have something interesting to say, not for the sake of regular posting.
- **Be Intelligent** – Provide some value. Don't talk down. Offer insight.
- **Be Conversational** – Avoid overly pedantic or “composed” language. Don't be afraid to bring in your own personality.
- **Be Non-Confrontational** – If you disagree, do so respectfully.
- **Be Prompt** – If you need to moderate or respond to a comment do so as quickly as possible.
- **Be Identifiable** – Use your real name and do not post anonymously.

# Social Media Don'ts

- **Don't Share Secrets** –If you aren't sure you can disclose something, just don't do it. Think about privacy, confidentiality and permission to use other people's content.
- **Don't Bad Mouth** – Keep the language clean & avoid slamming people or companies.
- **Don't Complain** – If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.
- **Don't Do Stupid Things** – If it doesn't help the general community, don't do it.
- **Don't Defame** – Show everyone respect.
- **Don't Forget your day job** –Social Media can consume you so don't forget your other duties. Moderate, balanced use is essential.





# SPS Social Networking

The following is a sample of a section of the **DRAFT** from the upcoming SPS Social Networking Policy – Consider this a sample as a guideline for right way to post school information via social media.

1. If an employee seeks to use social media sites as an educational tool or in relation to extracurricular activities or programs of the school district, the employee must seek and obtain the permission of his/her supervisor prior to preparing the site for student use.
2. If an employee wishes to use Facebook or other similar social media site to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club or an school-based activity or an official school-based organization, or an official sports team, the employee must also comply with the following rules:

Taken from the draft version of:  
Series 4000 - Personnel  
POLICY ON SOCIAL NETWORKING  
Stamford Public Schools

# SPS Social Networking

## Continued....

- The employee must set up the club, etc. **as a group list which will be "closed"** (e.g. membership in the group is limited to students, parents and appropriate school personnel, and "monitored" (e.g. the employee had the ability to access and supervise communications on the social media site).
- When Facebook is used as the social media site, **members will not be established as "friends," but as members of the group list.** When other social media sites are used, the employee will establish a similar parameter on the basis of the functionality of the social media site utilized.
- Anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the site may only gain access by the permission of the coordinator (e.g. teacher, administrator, supervisor or coach). Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the coordinator invites & allows them to join.
- Parents shall be permitted to access any site that their child has been invited to join.
- Access to the site may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization or team.
- The coordinator's responsible for the site will monitor it regularly.
- The coordinator's supervisor shall be permitted access to any site established by the employee for a school-related purpose.
- Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such district-sponsored social media activity.

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# Social Media Used by PTC

There are many different social media sites out there. You need to find the ones that are right for your needs. PT Council has chosen several social media sites to help communicate to our community. These are also sites that we can help you setup for your own use as well.

- Dedicated Website
- Facebook Page *(Not Group!)*
- Twitter
- WordPress (blog site)
- Vertical Response  
[www.verticalresponse.com](http://www.verticalresponse.com)

*(PTC Scheduled to begin use of this for the 2012-2013 School Year)*



[www.stamfordptcouncil.org](http://www.stamfordptcouncil.org)

# Social Media Used by PTC



[ptcofstamford.wordpress.com](http://ptcofstamford.wordpress.com)



[twitter.com/#!/ptcofstamfordct](https://twitter.com/#!/ptcofstamfordct)

# Social Media Used by PTC



[www.facebook.com/PTCouncilofStamfordCT](http://www.facebook.com/PTCouncilofStamfordCT)

*Try to keep a consistent look and feel across all medias.  
Colors, fonts, logos, graphics, etc...*



# Case Study

## Springdale Elementary School PTO

**To give you an idea of how to get started, we wanted to give you a real example.**

Springdale School PTO wanted to get timely information out to their parents and the time and money spent on creating Friday folders was becoming too time consuming and very costly – everything was printed and sorted for distribution every Friday to the students to take home. This past year, the PTO realized they did not have enough money in their budget to continue this and wanted to be more environmentally conscious.

### What to do? Go DIGITAL and be PAPERLESS!

**How?** They had already been using Vertical Response email distribution in the previous year – and would now really leverage this to communicate with parents. The PTO would need to coordinate with the school webmaster on making sure they would be able to send him pdfs/documents/and information that would be uploaded to the school website so that parents could access it if needed.

### WAY TO GO SPRINGDALE PTO! They made an amazing transition!

In addition to parents getting weekly emails (in place of the “Friday Folder”) with news and events they have also created a Twitter account and a Facebook Page to also distribute information – so they now have 4 key streams of information going to parents – Email | Website | Twitter | Facebook – chances are most of the parents in the school have access to one or all of these in this digital age. For the few that do not have access – printed copies of information is also available in the school office.

[springdalect.com](http://springdalect.com) | [twitter.com/#!/SpringdalePTO](https://twitter.com/#!/SpringdalePTO) | [facebook.com/SpringdaleSchoolPTO](https://facebook.com/SpringdaleSchoolPTO)



The Springdale Connection  
Home | Subscribe

News

**Family Science Night with the Maritime Center Grades K-5**  
You are invited to a Family Science Night on Tuesday, April 10, 2012 from 6:30-7:30pm in the Springdale School gym.  
Come out for some exciting learning and information about squids, sharks, whales, dolphins, various fish and experience the touch tank.  
This is a free event for our Springdale families. Come and join the fun.  
(English flyer) (Spanish flyer)

**Celebrate Springdale Art at the Government Center**  
You are cordially invited to an opening reception on Thursday, April 12 from 6:30-7:30 pm at the Govt Ctr, 5th floor, board room.  
Please join us as we honor 220 students in kindergarten through grade five for their artistic accomplishments. The artworks will be on display on the third and fifth floor lobbies and hallways, as well as the board room.  
until June 1. If the reception is on Thursday, April 12 from 6:30-7:30 pm at the Govt Ctr, 5th floor, board room.  
Please consider bringing a baked good for all to enjoy. Beverages plan to bring something. We hope to have a photo booth. Remember to bring photo ID.  
There are additional pieces on display in the lobby near the main entrance.  
Springdale PTO

**Earth Day Nike Reuse-a-thon**  
Earth Day is April 22nd and Springdale PTO is sponsoring a Nike Reuse-a-thon. Please donate a lobby near the main entrance.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
Over the next few weeks, Springdale PTO will be sponsoring a Big Brothers Big Sisters event. Large green balloons will be placed in the lobby near the main entrance. We purposefully placed them out there to let everyone know that we are sponsoring this event.  
Big Brothers Big Sisters adult mentors to children mentors, match them into a one-to-one relationship. Mature into a responsible private donations. All program, which serves children.

**Parking/Waiting**  
If you do park, please ask that you please be cars have blocked the way. We certainly want the cars to be able to park.

**Opportunities**

**Hope in Motion**  
Join Springdale School's team for Sunday, June 3. Follow the link.

**Shop Smart, Do Good On**  
Buy your ticket now for "Shop Smart, Do Good On".



# How Do I Start?

We realize all this information can be overwhelming and the web is constantly changing and evolving with new technologies. Start with one form of social media and when you are comfortable with that move on to another...

## Trying to figure out where to start?

1. Collaborate with your schools webmaster – stay in synch with him/her and see how you can work together to post information on the website events/PTO page of the site.
2. Setup a Email account (Vertical Response offers a free account with your non-profit status) and you can start to send emails on a weekly basis with your information – along with directing them to the school website for information and downloads.





# Resources

Vertical Response – Sign-up for Free Non-Profit Account

<http://www.verticalresponse.com/non-profits>

Setting up a Group Facebook Page (select Company/Organization/Institution and follow the prompts)

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php?ref\\_type=sitefooter](https://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php?ref_type=sitefooter)

A Facebook Page for information about how educators can best use Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/education>

Stamford Public Schools Policy for Websites/Pages (section 6160) – when Social Media guidelines are available PTC will post a link from their website.

[http://stamfordpublicschools.org/filestorage/68/107/801/6000-Instruction -  
\\_March\\_2012.pdf](http://stamfordpublicschools.org/filestorage/68/107/801/6000-Instruction_March_2012.pdf)



## **PTC Meeting Minutes: September 20, 2012**

1. Welcome by new president, Candy Yeager.
  - Candy explained the purpose of PTC is to bring together all parents of Stamford students as a force to inform and discuss the betterment of education in Stamford.
  - Candy advised that all PTO BOE reps attend BOE general and even committee meetings – many things are discussed by BOE members that effect students and schools; agendas can be found prior to meetings on SPS website. Currently magnet policy, enrollment figures and facilities needs are being discussed in committees.
  - Candy urged that although everyone is welcome to contact BOE members, first point of contact should be building principal, then PTC before bringing problems or issues to BOE.
2. Dr. Hamilton, Superintendent of SPS spoke:
  - Dr. Hamilton has held many posts in SPS over the years and is happy to bring this experience to the system as superintendent now.
  - She believes that we are better off academically than 4 years ago, an appropriate question to ask during an election year. Even though CAPT are flat, SAT scores and AP enrollment are rising.
  - Things to continue working on are parent involvement.
  - 2013-2014 budget cycle is starting now, central office has met with administrators. Last years budget did not see a cut in staff while adding programs with the lowest increase in 5 years and that is the same goal this year. SPS needs parents and PTO support for budget, go to meetings and speak up.
  - COMMON CORE – has been adopted by 46 states so progress will be an “apples to apples” comparison CC will strengthen readiness. There are pros & cons, may have to prepare teachers for change.
  - CAC (Citizens Advisory Council) is forming.
  - GE grant is ending, has provided much needed work in math programming, need to find similar funding for literacy.
3. Dr. Polly Rauh, President of BOE spoke:
  - The responsibility of SPS success should be shared by all in Stamford



- Common Core covers less content but in more depth.
- Capital Budget is ongoing – using EMG facilities needs survey of 2009 \$78 M was requested over 10 years but only essential items are being funded. BOE needs parent and PTO support on capital budget as well as operating. Question: what can parents do to influence capital budget? Answer: go to BOE, BOF and planning meetings, contact members. One particular budget issue is the custodial overtime charges that have run wild. Final budget is presented to Planning Board by March 15. Candy added that there was a good deal of success with the Budget Advisory committee last year for operating budget process, perhaps a similar committee should be formed for capital? Dr. Rauh mentioned that even though capital project requests may be approved for funding they are oftentimes not bonded so that the funds do not become available. It is important to get priorities on a list and get this information out to parents. Dr. Hamilton mentioned that in creating this list Central office tries not to pit one school against others in the grab for limited capital funds. Additionally, it was pointed out that any smaller projects under \$50k are usually done via facilities maintenance funding, which is operating.
- Urges parent to come to meetings, committee and general, although members will not get in dialogue with parents during meetings she assures us they are listening to what we have to say. Do let BOE members hear from you.
- She is interested in the idea of “schools of choice” which gives families the opportunity to be more fully invested in schools.
- Dr. Rauh is interested in holding staff in place and investing in their training so they do not wish to move on to other school districts

4. Amy Livolsi-Gragg, PTC Treasurer spoke

- Presented PTC budget: will be voted in at next meeting.
- November 15 is deadline for tax return filing 990 form
- Financial records must be kept to maintain 501c3 status as not for profit agency.
- Reminder to pay PTC dues

5. Wayne Holland – Special Education Program Director spoke:

- The Parent Advisory Board is forming – 10 parents, 2 students through Office of Family Engagement, to provide a broad cross section of viewpoints for decision making going forward on special education issues.



6. Miscellaneous Items:

- Each PTC rep should have received a handbook, Part 1 has changes from last year, resources, by-laws. Part 2 has current information for 2012-2013.
- (20 candidate forums will be co sponsored by PTC and League of Women Voters, will follow up with dates.
- The PTO presidents meeting offers a smaller environment to discuss best practices.
- Common Core - this is new to all of us, school system is not wiping out what is already in place and working. An introductory session will be held at AITE on 10/22 by Mona Hanna. Good news is schools will no longer be listed as “failing” under new guidelines.
- Dr. Hamilton – system is moving away from key textbook purchases and more towards technology to prepare students for Common Core testing on tablets or laptops.
- Sarah Arnold, SPS PR person is leaving.
- PTC is on Facebook & Twitter, check Danette & Michelle technology presentation from last year (including PTC website) for helpful information on getting info out to school community.

**Meeting adjourned, next meeting 11/ 15/12.**