

# Social media strategy and campaigns for schools

January 2016

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## Benefits of using social media to promote your school

Making the decision to promote your school through social media is a huge step. With the protection and safeguarding of students at the forefront of their minds, many school leaders worry about the risks.

But the benefits of using social media to promote your school and engage with stakeholders – parents, students, teachers, governors and the local community – can far outweigh the risks. And the risks can be easily mitigated with effective forward planning.

### The benefits of using social media in schools include:

- Better talent identification and recruitment (LinkedIn is great for this)
- Improved communications with parents
- Two-way dialogue with parents to improve student outcomes
- Bigger or better public profile for your school (building public awareness of your achievements, successes and specialisms)
- Increased local business engagement for student career development opportunities, and potential sponsorship or events and venue hire income
- Improved internal communications among staff and students
- Better career prospects for students (students understand how to use social media to connect with potential employers, and have heightened awareness of how their social media presence can positively or negatively affect their chances of getting a job)

This downloadable PDF document from the digital strategists and educators at Jonny Ross Consultancy gives the top ten tips for schools on using social media for promotion, communication and engagement.

It includes advice on setting up social media accounts, managing risks through forward planning and setting out clear guidance policies, and running campaigns to promote your school and engage with stakeholders.

# 10 tips on using social media in schools

Here are our top ten tips for schools on using social media for promotion, communication and engagement.

## **(1) Set some basic social media marketing goals for your school**

If your school already has brand values (a 'school ethos') and a marketing plan (for profile building and student recruitment), then simply take the goals from those documents, and create some social media goals for your school. Social media goals should compliment and contribute to your school's general marketing objectives, not run separate to them. Overall goals might be about increasing student numbers or improving exam results.

## **(2) Develop targeted communications objectives**

For each of your stakeholder groups (parents, employees, students, local businesses, governors etc) choose three communication objectives. An example might be to set up work experience opportunities with ten new prominent local businesses, or to reach 50% of parents through social media with important messages about the school. Then, with the team who will be managing your social media accounts, work out how you aim to achieve these objectives. Objectives should be specific and measurable, including timeframes.

## **(3) Create a social media policy for your school**

Before you begin encouraging staff to use social media to help promote the school, we advise setting some boundaries on social media use. Staff will also probably appreciate some guidance on how to use social media appropriately, as many may not be familiar with the various platforms. Include some advice on how to set up and use social media accounts, as well as information about the school's target stakeholder groups, communication goals and objectives. This will help staff to understand what you want to achieve through using social media.

Also, give some careful consideration to whom will be running your social media accounts. It should be someone with a good understanding of the school's strategy who would know how to respond quickly to most queries and maturely handle any negative comments or feedback.

## **(4) Offer social media training for employees**

Offer basic social media training to your staff. Not only will it equip them with enough knowledge to assist the school in its new social media marketing, it will also help them to understand what students are talking about when classroom conversations turn to 'Pokes', Trending Topics and #hashtags! By equipping your staff with the right knowledge and skills to run social media accounts and manage their personal accounts more effectively, you are much more likely to achieve your school's marketing goals and communication objectives. If you don't feel confident delivering this training, bring in a social media expert to deliver it for you.

## **(5) Arrange a meeting with key members of staff**

It is a good idea to have a meeting with key members of staff to share information on upcoming key events and other items you would like to highlight through social media. Also, make a decision on the type of voice and personality that you would like your social

media platforms to have, as well as who will be posting and monitoring the social media accounts and when.

### **(6) Create an editorial calendar**

Once you have your team on board and the key social media management decisions have been made, you should then create an editorial calendar. This is a document that can be created by several individuals to house important information, such as:

- What you will be posting or tweeting
- Which social media platform it will be sent to
- What keywords will be included (these are terms that people might type into Google, that you would want to be found for, such as “best school in [your area]” or “school venue hire”
- What hashtags or links will be included
- Who it will be posted by
- Which image or video you will be using, if any

### **(7) Set up a school LinkedIn profile**

Schools should view LinkedIn like a company page. You can set your school up on there, with a ‘Company Profile.’ Fill out as many of the boxes as possible, as this is great not only for reader information, but for SEO too. Suggest that key staff members set up an individual LinkedIn profile. All the staff and teachers at your school can be on LinkedIn as employees. This will help promote the school and assist them with networking whilst also allowing everyone to keep up to date with education industry news.

### **(8) Set up a school organisation page on Facebook**

People will search for your school on Facebook. If you don’t set up an official page, you might find someone else may do so instead (unofficially). Set up a Facebook group for prospective parents on Facebook. Parents often link up and chat on Facebook, so your group will provide them with a platform to discuss school options and ask questions in a friendly and controlled environment that you are able to regulate. It will show prospective parents that you value their input. You can also use your Facebook group to post public events and remind people about key school diary dates.

### **(9) Set up a school Twitter account**

The great thing about Twitter is that you can set up an account and watch what others are doing first, before beginning to post messages from your school. Follow other schools, teachers, local MPs, key education organisations etc. See how others are using Twitter first, and begin interacting with them. Share ideas and offer help. Use Twitter Newsfeed to find out what’s going on (journalists now use Twitter to find breaking news).

### **(10) Measure and monitor progress**

It is a good idea to set up a social media committee. Monitor and measure progress regularly against your goals. Set new goals and share success stories.

For more free advice on using social media in schools, visit the JRC blog and search for “schools” at: [www.jonnyross.com/blog](http://www.jonnyross.com/blog)

## About Jonny Ross Consultancy

Jonny Ross Consultancy is an award-winning digital marketing agency. We work with a wide range of organisations, including schools, colleges, universities and businesses.

We support education providers to develop and implement effective digital marketing and online engagement strategies.

We do SEO, social media, content marketing, website design and website development. We also run workshops and deliver bespoke training for organisations and individuals.

Our in-house team is purposefully small and dynamic. We work with a team of associate professional copywriters, designers and developers, who all bring strong experience to the table from a range of different specialisms. This model of working keeps ideas fresh and innovative, brings new inspiration and means Jonny Ross Consultancy can offer a bespoke full service package at fraction of the cost of a full service agency.

### About Jonny Ross

Jonny Ross has over 13 years of experience running a small business, and over 12 years of experience in digital online technologies. He specialises in digital and social media marketing, web design and search engine optimisation.

Jonny has a proven track record in delivering strategies and solutions that will drive the right audience to a organistaion's website and increase engagement and conversions.

Jonny's education sector experience includes working with schools, colleges and universities on building websites and blogs, developing new social media platforms and campaigns, managing social media accounts, and as an expert social media speaker at education conferences and events.

### Portfolio

Our portfolio can be seen at: [www.jonnyross.com/portfolio](http://www.jonnyross.com/portfolio)

