

The Maine Education Association Benefits Trust (MEABT) believes in fostering a thriving online community and supports social networking as a valuable component of shared media. MEABT's Social Networking Guidelines have been developed for MEABT and the members who use MEABT's social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Legal Parameters: The following paragraphs discuss your general legal responsibilities and non-disclosure obligations. Failure to abide by these guidelines can result in serious ramifications, such as the loss of social networking privileges, the removal of material and adverse employment actions. The word "material" refers to anything posted on MEABT's social networking sites, including but not limited to, comments, documents, photographs and videos.

Legal Liability: You are personally responsible for the material that you post on MEABT's Social Networking sites. You can be held personally liable for any material deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous (whether pertaining to MEABT, individuals, or any other company). In essence, you post material at your own risk. Outside parties actually can pursue legal action against you (not MEABT) for postings.

Do not post material that is illegal, sexually explicit, obscene, defamatory, derogatory, related to alcohol or drug use, or in violation of copyright laws.

Do not access MEABT's Social Networking sites from your school computer or during work time if it violates district policy.

MEABT's Social Networking sites are not for commercial use. Any advertisements or other for-profit materials not authorized by MEABT are strictly prohibited.

MEABT reserves all rights to refuse to post any material or remove any material that violates these guidelines, violates MEABT policy, or is otherwise inappropriate.

Company Privileged Information: You may not post material regarding any confidential information related to MEABT's policy, strategy, financials, members, etc. You may not use the MEABT logo and/or trademarks without MEABT's express written permission.

Press Inquiries: Postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you about a MEABT-related blog posting or requests MEABT information of any kind, contact MEABT. You should also reach out for PR clarification on whether specific information has been publicly disclosed before you post material.

Best Practices: These four recommendations provide a roadmap for constructive, respectful, and productive use of MEABT's Social Networking sites.

Be Respectful: Respect your audience and your coworkers. Take care not to engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. All MEABT members can be viewed (correctly or incorrectly) as representatives of the union, which can add significance to your public reflections on the organization (whether you intend to or not).

Get Your Facts Straight: To ensure you are not misrepresenting MEABT or its work or positions consider reaching out to the relevant MEABT staff before posting material. This courtesy will help you provide your readers with accurate insights, especially when you are posting material outside your area of expertise.

Be Mindful of Your Public Image: Consider the image you want to portray to the public. Be mindful that what you post may be viewed by parents, students, administrators and community members, and may stay public for a long time.

Use Your Best Judgment: Remember there may be consequences to what you post. Consider your content carefully. If you are about to post something that makes you slightest bit uncomfortable, review these guidelines and think about whether to post the material.

Standards for Appropriate Conversation: MEABT believes it is important that online conversations on its Web site and other social media tools remain professional and respectful. MEABT monitors comments prior to posting to ensure compliance with its Social Networking Guidelines. MEABT posts comments quickly, but reserves the right to decline to post comments or remove comments if they are inappropriate or otherwise violate the MEABT Social Networking Guidelines.

Length: Be succinct. If a comment is overly lengthy, MEABT reserves the right to shorten it. At most, please keep your comment to less than 500 words.

Reasons for not approving comments include:

- The comment is not respectful.
- The comment is not relevant to the topic.
- We have reason to believe that the commenter is misrepresenting himself/herself.
- A single person is dominating the conversation.

These guidelines incorporate by reference all MEABT Policies and Procedures.