



SOCIAL MEDIA AWARENESS PROGRAM

OCPS STUDENTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Students

OCPS is committed to the success of nearly 200,000 students. We will use any means that are legal and appropriate to keep our children safe in a society that has many dangers. Because social media can be the source of bullying, school threats or masked cries for help, we believe it is appropriate to monitor public sites, sites that anyone can view. For security purposes, we will not disclose all of the details related to monitoring social media.

OCPS has adopted a social media awareness program in order to ensure the continued safety and security of the OCPS community. The district will use software to identify online communications that suggest harm, self-harm, violence, bullying, mischief and vandalism to property owned and operated by OCPS.

OCPS leadership encourages you to tell your parents or a member of school administration when you are aware of or experience any type of bullying, harassment or violence. We support the “See Something, Say Something” concept – which means if you see or find something on the internet or in your school that does not seem right, you should report it. This could be a friend that talks about harming themselves or others, or rumors of a fight.

The ability to prevent an incident before it occurs is one of the districts best approaches to ensure your safety at school. Please take the time to read the Frequently Asked Questions below to help you understand more about the program.

What is the OCPS social media awareness program and how does it work?

- The program works as an active appraisal tool of social media channels for relevant information. Using social media analysis software, public, private and non-governmental organizations can search and view publicly available posts on various social media platforms to assist in the timely identification of pertinent information. OCPS will utilize social media analysis software to identify active or potential safety concerns to the district, its students, and its employees.

Why does OCPS review social media?

- OCPS Emergency Management, Safety and Security personnel work every day to keep students and staff safe from harm. The use of social media analysis software allows the department to proactively conduct assessments of publicly viewable social media that is often the fastest source of relevant safety and security information. Early identification of hazards will allow OCPS the opportunity to intervene, the ultimate goal being the prevention of harm to students, staff and OCPS facilities. Furthermore, following safety related trends on social media will allow OCPS to be aware of past, current or future hazards in real time.



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What is OCPS searching for?

- The social media analysis software is strictly being used as a tool to intervene with or prevent safety hazards and security concerns involving the district, its students and its employees. Scans of social media will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Identification of emerging incidents and other emergency situations.
 - Statements of self-harm or harm to others.
 - References to violence and weapons within the school environment.
 - Criminal activity potentially affecting schools; and
 - Bullying or other harassing behaviors.

Will OCPS discipline students for their electronic speech?

- Everyone has the right to free speech as protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the district does not intend to investigate the social lives of its students and employees. However, if online or electronic speech interferes with the ability to provide a safe learning and working environment or if the speech violates the OCPS Code of Student Conduct, the district may take investigatory or disciplinary action. Please see your copy of the OCPS Code of Student Conduct, or download a copy from the OCPS website under the “Student” link.

Will the school access the private accounts of students?

- No, OCPS will be using the software to view publicly available posts and related accounts.

Is the district analyzing only the postings made from school computers?

- No, OCPS can view any posts made on a public social media site.

Is the district requiring passwords and account information?

- No, OCPS will not be accessing individual user personal accounts. Only publicly available posts will be available for analysis.

What will OCPS do if they find something of concern?

- OCPS takes all safety concerns seriously. District-related safety concerns will be investigated and if necessary, referred to the appropriate authorities.

If a student becomes aware of activities on social media that may be of concern, what steps should be taken?

- If you become aware of social media posts that raise concerns for the safety and security of the district, students and staff please contact your school and provide them with as much information regarding the post as possible.



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Will OCPS use or sell the information collected for marketing purposes?

- No. OCPS follows the requirements in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) relative to student information. The service provider is restricted by law and by contract to the specific purposes of the program as identified by OCPS.

Can I opt out of the social media awareness program?

- There is no opting in or out of the social media awareness program. The privacy of the social media posts are at the discretion of the user. The district encourages everyone to be aware of Internet safety and develop a healthy online reputation.