



How to respond to Negative Comments



Our online communication is just as important as our in-person communication. Our social media tells our story, it helps connect people, and develops relationships. If we don't step up and respond to negativity online, it's similar to allowing it in our school hallways. You've worked hard to create a positive climate/culture within your school walls- make sure you are doing the same online!

General Tips for a School owned Social Media Account

- 1. Decide who will be responding to comments and how they should respond.** Delegate a few individuals to respond to comments on social media from your school account. Depending on your school size, you may need as few as 2 or as many as 10 monitoring your comments. Consistency in your responses can create a unified front from your organization. Consider making a flow chart of how you should respond to certain types of comments.
- 2. Use the Thank—Acknowledge—Respond approach.** Thank the individual for bringing the issue to your attention. Acknowledge their emotion. Offer a way to respond to you in person, via email, or over the phone.
Example:
Upset follower: The person you quoted is historically a killer - this is not leadership and they should not be glorified.
School Social: Thank you for bringing this to our attention, it sounds like this was hard for you to read. Our intent was not to highlight or glorify someone who caused harm to others - we will work on improving. Please email us in the future with concerns socialmedia@oaschs.k12.or.us
- 3. Don't fight back.** Many individuals comment or respond on our social media because they are feeling strongly about an issue. While the things they say can be hurtful or disrespectful, don't be afraid to be honest and positive.
Example: We hear that this issue is frustrating and sad for you, we are working to make sure to handle this issue with respect and privacy.)
- 4. Don't give them a reason to be negative.** It's hard to comment negatively on something that is inherently good. Fill up your feed with positive things your organization is doing to take away the space for someone to say something mean.

General Tips for Personal Social Media

- 1. Reply with positivity.** If someone comments on your own page or DM's you something negative, respond with a compliment. Or, go to their page and compliment some of their posts/photos.
- 2. Report the page if it's a fake account, made to be mean to others.** You can comment with #icanhelp to bring in digital warriors for help.
- 3. Block the Comments.** Did you know you have the option to turn off the comments on your Instagram posts and Youtube videos? If you need a break from negative comments, turn off your comments.
- 4. Take a Social Media Fast.** Sometimes, the best way to respond to negative social media is to not see it. Take a day or 7 days away from Social Media and write in your journal each day about how you feel--it might surprise you.

Lessons for Advisers about Social Media

- Use the [LEAST Lesson](#) and [LEAST Worksheets](#) in your classroom to teach your students how to respond to negative comments. Shared with permission from Meg Adams, Everett High School, and Crystal Stengele, Kamiak High School.
- Use the [THINK](#) before you Post Flyer.

