



A Union of Professionals

Classroom Tips

Appropriate Uses of Modern Technology

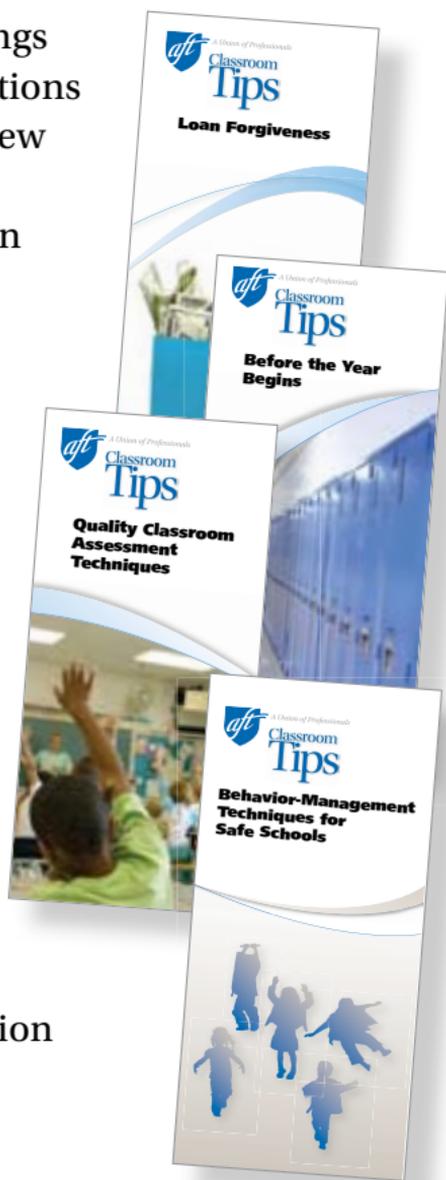


Classroom Tips

Each new school year brings high hopes, great expectations and challenges for both new and seasoned educators. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has developed a series called *Classroom Tips* to help educators start the year off right and anticipate the year ahead.

Classroom Tips is developed with you, the educator, in mind. The tips in this collection are taken from real classroom experiences and are part of the AFT's Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) professional development program.

The AFT is a leader in providing educators the resources they need to help them succeed. Visit AFT's Web site for classroom resources at www.aft.org/tools4teachers today.



Modern technology and the Internet have opened the door to a plethora of new opportunities to learn. It is now easier to research, communicate and study, thanks to advances in technology.

There are, however, problems and dangers associated with new technology. Teachers need to remain up to date on these advances. Encourage administrators to employ in-service professional development on this topic and to research individually both the costs and benefits of new technology tools available to both students and teachers.

Teaching Online Safety to Students

Lessons in online safety are increasingly important as social networking and online communication become more popular with students. These lessons should be taught as part of the curriculum, and students should be assessed on their knowledge of online safety, particularly before they are given assignments requiring Internet access.

1. Instruct students that they should never, under any circumstances, give out any personal information, including their name, address, or phone number in any type of chat room or on any social networking site.
2. Encourage students not to correspond with anyone that they have not already met in person.
3. Emphasize that students should never meet someone that they have met online without the permission of their parents.
4. Stress that students should tell their parents if anything they see on the Internet makes them uncomfortable.



5. Make sure that students know that people online may not be who they say they are. There is no way of knowing if somebody who claims to be an 11-year-old boy actually is one.
6. Explain to students the benefits of making their social networking sites private.
7. Be sure that students know that their “screen name” should not include personal information. Do not use birthdays, hometowns, etc.
8. Tell students that once they post information online, they cannot take it back. Even if they delete their information, it still exists on older versions of the site on other computers.
9. Caution students that if they want to post photos of themselves on social networking sites, they should limit access to their site to “friends only” and make sure the photos are appropriate and will not cause embarrassment to themselves or others. Every photo they post can easily become “public property,” so students need to act accordingly.
10. Encourage parents to monitor their children’s Internet activities and to educate them-



selves on the dangers of the Internet. A good resource to start with is **OnGuardOnline.gov**, which provides practical tips to help you stay safe while surfing the Internet.

Social Networking

The widespread popularity of social networking Web sites like Facebook and MySpace have created a new generation of problems and potential liabilities for educators. Further, the ease of posting information, including videos and other media, on the Internet by anyone with Internet access can create problems for teachers when false information is posted about them.

Are Teachers at Risk?

Despite free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, online indecency would fall under general district or institutional guidelines banning inappropriate behavior both in and outside school. Courts have ruled that schools can regulate off-campus speech by teachers if such speech can be demonstrated to have an adverse impact on the campus. Teachers in Florida, Colorado, Tennessee and Massachusetts have been dismissed and/or suspended because of the content of their social networking sites.

Teachers may also be held responsible for content posted about them, either by other individuals such as students or by organizations.

How Can Teachers Minimize Risk?

The best way to prevent a problem arising from a social networking site is to simply not have one. For those who do have one, they should take

certain steps to ensure that their information remains private.

Keep in mind that there are always ways to circumvent privacy settings. Teachers should not post any material that others may consider offensive and should not “friend” their students or permit students to “friend” them. Also, teachers should consider using something other than their full name as a username. For example, if a teacher’s name is John Smith, his Facebook name could be simply “John S.”

Teachers should be alert to the possibility that students or others might post information or media about them on the Internet. Teachers should use simple Web searches to periodically check whether information has been posted about them and check the accuracy of that information. Teachers should always print out any false or defamatory information that they find about themselves.

Most Web sites that allow posting by the public have methods for individuals to contest information that has been posted about them. YouTube will generally remove unauthorized videos, for example, and sites such as MySpace are usually quick to take down fake profiles when alerted by the actual person who has been profiled.

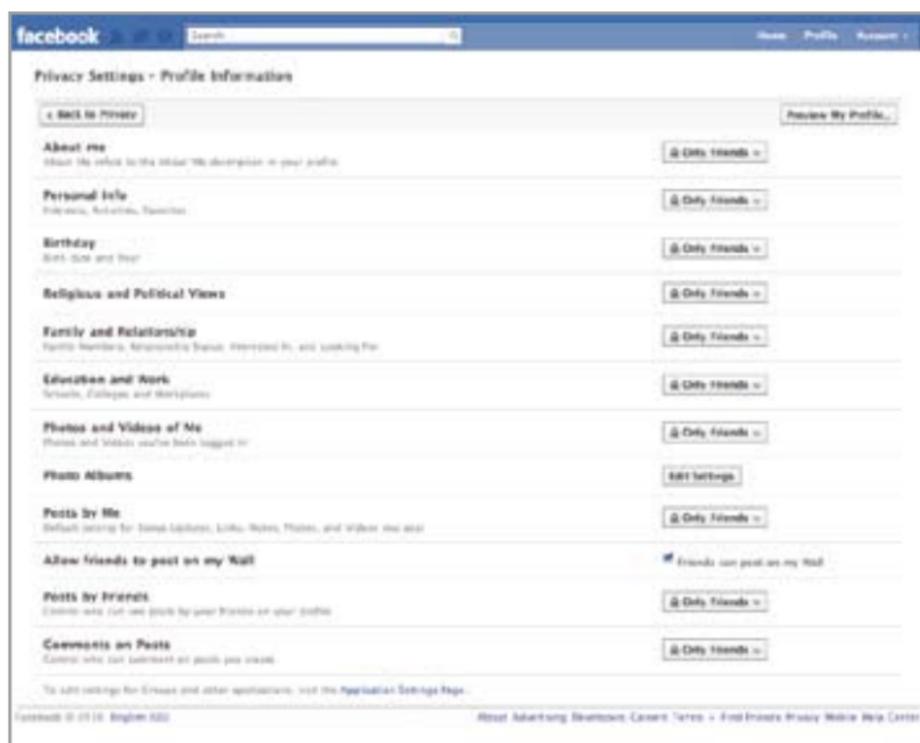
Teachers should also check their school or district policy regarding the use of cell phones and/or other recording devices in the classroom and know what remedies are available to them if a student takes unauthorized photographs or videos.

Finally, a teacher should not make disciplinary decisions about a student regarding an Internet posting if the teacher is the target of the speech. Rather, a teacher should discuss the matter with other school staff (e.g., principal and union

representative) and/or seek out an informal resolution with students and parents. The teacher should ensure that both parents and students understand that a student's reputation can greatly suffer by posting harmful speech on the Internet and that the speech might get picked up by future employers.

How To Make a Facebook Account Private

1. Log on to Facebook account
2. Under the *account* tab, click *privacy settings*
3. Click on the link that says *Profile Information*
4. Make sure all options are set to "Only Friends"



How to Hide your Profile from Facebook Search

1. Log on to Facebook account
2. Under the *account* tab, click *privacy settings*

3. Click on *Search*
4. Set search visibility to “Only Friends” and uncheck all the boxes



How To Make a MySpace Account Private

1. Log on to MySpace account
2. From MySpace homepage, click the link that says *My Account*

General Privacy:

Online Now: Show people when I am online

Birthday: Show my birthday to my friends

Profile on Mobile: Choose who can view your profile on mobile (e.g., m.myspace.com, iPhone, Sidekick, Hello, Blackberry and other apps).

Anyone can view my profile on mobile

Anyone 18 and over can view my profile on mobile

Only my friends can view my profile on mobile

Comments: Choose who can view your comments page.

Anyone can view my comments

Anyone 18 and over can view my comments

Only my friends can view my comments

Friends: Choose who can view your friends page. Mutual friends are always public.

Anyone can view my friends

Anyone 18 and over can view my friends

Only my friends can view my friends

Photos: Choose who can view your photos page. Set album level privacy in photos.

Anyone can view my Photos Page

Anyone 18 and over can view my Photos Page

Only my friends can view my Photos Page

Allow my photos to be shared/emailed

Status and Mood: Choose who can view your Status and Mood page.

Anyone can view my Status & Mood

Anyone 18 and over can view my Status & Mood

Only my friends can view my Status & Mood

Block Users By Age: Allow users under 18 to contact me

Block Users: Block individual users by clicking "Block User" on their profile. [\[View list\]](#)

3. Click the *Privacy* link
4. Make sure that under the “*profile viewable by*” option, “My Friends Only” is selected
5. Uncheck all boxes
6. Click *Save All Changes*

Tools for Cheating

Students now have access to an array of devices to access previously saved digital notes, secretly communicate with classmates and search the Internet for answers during a test. If they are fast enough to go unnoticed, which newer technology supports, they can do this all from their desk. Teachers need to know how some of this occurs and how to prevent it from happening in their classroom, such as requiring all students to turn off all electronic devices during class, including cell phones and iPods, and to put them away in a book bag, purse, etc. or simply go over this rule each time a test is taken.

Cell Phones

Notes

- Keying in quick notes, formulas or dates affords students with a simple option that works with any cell phone. Information is saved under their contact list or with a notes application.

Text Messaging

- Students can operate phone keys quickly in order to deliver messages to other students taking the test in the same room or to students taking the test in a later class period. Newer phones have QWERTY style keypads to make this process even quicker and easier.

Picture Messaging

- Students save pictures of exam questions

taken with built-in digital cameras on cell phones. They can send copies to other students the same way they send text messages.

Internet/E-mail access

- Many phones now come equipped with Internet and e-mail capabilities. They work just like laptops, except they are easier to hide. Pulling up a Web browser allows students to read e-mails or view information containing answers.

iPods & MP3 Players

Notes and Lyrics

- Students can easily transfer text files to their personal music device. This allows them to access large amounts of pre-entered text to use while answering test questions.

Voice-Recorded Notes

- Students can record notes through a simple voice recorder that plugs into any iPod. Even if teachers prohibit iPods during exams, be aware that long sleeves can hide the cord while the student rests his head in his hand to cover the earpiece. Students with long hair can hide headphones underneath their hair.

Calculators

Storage

- Calculators like the popular TI-83+ have math programs that allow students to program notes and equations into their calculator before exams.

Fake Memory Clears

- Students have designed programs that pretend to clear the memory by showing the normal “MEM CLEARED” screen without

actually clearing the memory. To prevent this, Texas Instruments has developed TestGuard 2.0, a program that deletes all applications and programs in calculators.

Nintendo DS

PictoChat

- Most prevalent in elementary schools, this hand-held video gaming system may appear to be used solely for playing video games, but its PictoChat feature allows students to use the touch screen to draw or send text messages to anyone else with a Nintendo DS within a 30-foot radius.



Five Great Reasons to Join a Union of Professionals

The American Federation of Teachers:

1 Supports you in the classroom. Effective learning only takes place when high-quality teachers, with the support of other competent professionals, have the materials and assistance needed to accomplish the task. Your union is a strong advocate for quality classroom materials that are aligned to the standards of achievement we expect our students to meet. We also insist that state and district assessments for measuring student progress are aligned with these standards and that the assessments be used appropriately to support student learning.

2 Helps you prepare. No matter how well prepared you may have been before entering the classroom, there is always room for improvement. Ongoing professional development that meets you at your point of need is vital for continued growth as an educator. The AFT and its affiliates deliver some of the finest professional development programs available; and in situations where ours are not available, we advocate and broker for you to receive the best training possible.

3 Stands up for you. Whether the discussion is taking place in the White House, in the halls of Congress, on the floor of your statehouse, in colleges of education or in your local editorial pages, you can be sure that union representatives are weighing in assertively, ensuring that the collective voice of educators comes through clearly and effectively.

4 Advocates for your profession. No one enters the teaching profession without a strong desire to help children reach their potential. Yet, at times the realities of life make this calling difficult to stick with. Adequate salaries and benefits are essential in order to keep the best teachers, paraprofessionals and support staff in our public schools. Working conditions such as manageable class sizes, adequate teaching materials, and discipline policies that support teaching and enhance student learning are important factors in ensuring that the best teachers remain in the classroom.

5 Keeps you informed. *American Educator* is one of the most highly respected journals available to keep you informed on current thinking in public education by some of the most capable thinkers and doers in the field. *American Teacher* will keep you on top of the challenges and successes of your colleagues across the country. And a host of optional publications, as well as a comprehensive Web site that will assist you in addressing the particular needs of your school and classroom, provide the balance of a professional literature package that is second to none.



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