



Sweet Briar College

Social Media Guidelines

*For help with all your social media questions, contact
Dana Poleski, Office of Communications, at dpoleski@sbc.edu.*

Social media is perfect for connecting and engaging with everyone in the Sweet Briar family: fellow Vixens, prospective students and their families, and friends. While we communicate in a number of ways — including email and, yes, good old-fashioned mail — social media is direct and conversational, which offers great opportunities for meaningful engagement. Sweet Briar College is a close-knit, vibrant community of students, faculty, staff and alumnae that exists not only on campus, but around the country and all over the world. Our social media should reflect this same sense of community.

The following guidelines were developed by the Office of Communications for Sweet Briar College-related pages, groups and accounts managed by:

1. Academic Programs
2. Athletics Teams
3. Student Clubs and Organizations
4. Alumnae, Parents and Friends (recommended but not required)

These guidelines do not apply to personal social media accounts. The College reaffirms its commitment to freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Branding Your Social Media Presence

Name Your Presence

On Facebook, the title of your page or group should include "Sweet Briar College" at the beginning of it to make it easier for people to search for and find it.

- **Acceptable Facebook Page Example:** Sweet Briar College Alumnae Alliance
- **Not Acceptable Facebook Page Examples:** SBC Alumnae Alliance, Sweet Briar Alumnae Alliance, Vixen Alliance

On Twitter, Instagram and other places with character limitations, please include "Sweet Briar College" in the description of those accounts.

Use of College-owned Assets [Logos, Images, Video, Audio]

The Office of Communications will provide departments with an acceptable logo to use as your profile picture. If you would like to use any other logos, images, videos, audio or additional content that is copyrighted or owned by Sweet Briar College, please contact the Office of Communications at communications@sbcc.edu. Per the College's Brand Guide, do not modify logos.

Maintaining Your Social Media Presence

Be Thoughtful

Once content is shared online, it's there forever. Be confident in the sources you are sharing from.

Be Active

Social media users expect new, relevant content, so plan to post frequently. However, depending on the medium being used (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), that could mean several times a day or a few times a week. It's easy to fall into a thought process where you are aiming to post a certain number of times per day. It's much more important to post quality content your audience wants to engage with than it is to meet a posting quota.

TIP: Plan content ahead of time. Keep a document or calendar to keep track of ideas. As you learn more about the community you're hoping to engage with and what kinds of content they most enjoy, you'll be able to generate more ideas. Share your content plan with your colleagues and ask if they have any ideas to add!

Be Timely

Post content when your users are more likely to engage with it. Use measuring tools like Facebook Insights or Twitter Analytics to monitor times of day and days of the week when you see the most and least engagement. Keep track of trending topics and if you have content that aligns with a subject, post it while people are discussing that topic. This will help make sure your content is getting in front of people at the right time.

Many social media sites offer users the opportunity to schedule posts ahead of time. While this can be useful to cover someone's vacation time or Christmas break, try to avoid scheduling posts if possible. It's important to make yourself available after you've shared content with your audience.

TIP: Set aside time not only to create posts for social media, but to respond and react to your community's questions and comments. Users expect responses quickly, so prepare yourself to monitor and check in with content after you've shared it.

Be Accurate

It's more important to post correct information than it is to be the first to post about it. Take the time to confirm the facts and information you are sharing. Proofread your copy and double-check proper grammar, punctuation and spelling usage. If you are sharing content someone else created, make sure you give them the appropriate credit.

TIP: Everyone makes mistakes now and then. If you share something and find an error in it, some platforms (Facebook, Instagram) allow you to make small edits to make the correction. In some instances, members of your community may point these errors out to you. Be sure to thank them for pointing it out and adjust if you are able to do so. We don't recommend deleting your post and reposting it, except in extenuating circumstances (e.g. content meant for a personal social media presence was shared in error on a department or organization's account).

Be Engaging

Social media are not meant to be used as a one-way communications highway. You're building a community. You want your audience to like your content but you also want them to comment, share, ask questions and hopefully contribute their own content. You also want to build a space where you are giving back to that community. Like other Facebook pages and follow other Twitter accounts and engage with their posts. Like and share posts shared with your page or account.

TIP: Follow other College pages, accounts and people and share their content when you think it fits in best with your content approach. We can all strengthen each other's social media presence by sharing or retweeting content from each other's accounts. This is especially true for Twitter and Instagram, where reposts/retweets can increase your reach and engagement.

For example: If you're managing a Twitter account and another Sweet Briar College Twitter account has shared a link to an article that you think is also relevant to your audience, retweet the link directly, rather than uploading it again.

If you want to share other people's content on a platform that doesn't natively allow sharing of content (like Instagram), or if you would like to share content shared on one medium to a different medium (such as sharing an Instagram photo on Facebook), make sure you get permission to share another account owner's content before posting it on your own and make sure you give them credit in your caption/post.

Managing Your Social Media Presence

Designate Social Media Managers

Administrative rights to each social media account should be granted to a minimum of two people. One person should be designated the primary administrator who is responsible for posting the content, while all administrators should be involved with the strategic planning of the content being shared. This structure will prevent multiple people from posting content simultaneously while ensuring there is a consistent voice for the account so any administrator can take on posting responsibilities in the absence of the primary administrator. If student workers are assisting with the management of your social media accounts, make sure a faculty or staff member has administrative rights. (Remember, students graduate and leave campus!) If possible, create a shared email address, username and password so the account is not tied to a specific individual.

We expect every person who is responsible for a Sweet Briar-affiliated social media presence to be attentive, courteous, reasonable and understanding. Refrain from the use of obscenities and other inappropriate remarks that could be construed as offensive or inconsiderate. Alcohol shouldn't be featured, nor should anything else inappropriate/illegal: drugs, nudity or sexually explicit content. Make sure you are keeping personal and professional accounts as separate as possible. Also, be cognizant when sharing content that others have provided to you, particularly on Twitter. Make sure before hitting that "Share" or "Retweet" button that the content aligns with Sweet Briar's guidelines and best practices, as well as the goals of your department.

We also expect every person interacting with your account to show you the same respect and courtesy. We encourage you to post community rules for your page whenever possible. For example, the Sweet Briar College Facebook page's "About" section includes the following:

"Sweet Briar College's social media accounts are online communities for our prospective and current students, families, faculty, staff, alumnae, friends and fans. We welcome you to post photos, engage in discussions and ask questions; we will do our best to respond in a timely manner. Please note that spam, obvious commercial, obscene and/or denigrating messages and other forms of inappropriate content, as well as personal attacks, are not permitted in this setting and may be removed at our discretion. Repeat violators of this policy may be blocked from engaging with this page. We thank you in advance for helping us make this space one that best reflects the Sweet Briar spirit."

Maintain Confidentiality and Respect Copyright and Trademark Laws

Do not discuss confidential or sensitive internal issues online without authorization. Be conscious of the laws and regulations governing the privacy of student education records (FERPA), protected health information (HIPAA), personally identifiable information and private information about colleagues. Do not post confidential information about faculty, students, alumnae or other employees.

Also, be mindful of copyright and trademark protections that may limit what materials you use online. This is especially important with pictures, which may require you to confirm that the people in the photo consent to the use of their image and to determine whether it is clear who owns the picture. It is not okay to copy photos or logos from the web and post them to your social media pages without permission from the owners.

If you have a question related to copyright and trademark laws, email communications@sbcc.edu.

How to Handle Negative Comments

Have a plan for responding to negative or inaccurate comments. Sometimes the comments just need to be monitored and you'll need to tune in and listen; other times it'll require a response. In some cases, you'll be their initial contact with Sweet Briar, so it's important to show them you're interested in resolving the situation and that you care. If they ask a question you don't know the answer to, let them know you're finding out for them and will be in touch — and then follow through.

Do not delete a Facebook post or comment just because it's negative. Correct any inaccuracies they've made in a positive and polite way and point them to additional resources if you know of any. If they continue to be an issue, contact the Office of Communications for advice on how to respond.

How to Handle Emergency/Concerning Situations

The Office of Communications and the Emergency Planning Team ask that during an active emergency on campus, all social media accounts associated with Sweet Briar, with the exception of the main College accounts operated out of the Office of Communications, should refrain from posting except official statements that have been communicated by the chief information officer during an emergency.

If you come across a post threatening a member of our community's health, safety or security, or a post that is perceived as a threat to the College, bring it to the attention of campus safety immediately by calling 434-381-6111. Get a screenshot of the post for the record. Once you have saved the screenshot and shared the information and post with campus safety, delete the post. Do not attempt to contact the person/entity who created the post.

If you identify an issue related to other concerns (facilities, technology, etc.), please contact the appropriate office.

Athletics

Please be mindful of existing sponsorships and avoid undermining them in your social posts. For example, Sweet Briar Athletics partners with Under Armour, so you should refrain from posting Nike logos on your Sweet Briar team account. Contact athletics for specific NCAA guidelines, which change each year.