



# ***Social School Lunch:***

*A How-To Guide on Social Media for School Nutrition Programs*



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## **What is Social Media?**

Social media encompasses a collection of online tools and platforms that allow individuals to post and share information. These websites include Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, Flickr, and YouTube, among others.

The purpose of these online forums is to build relationships and foster information sharing between individuals. You probably already belong to a number of social media networks. Do you maintain a Facebook profile? Tweet about your day? Keep up a blog? If you do any of these activities, you are participating in social media.

SNA already maintains a presence on several social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. We use these outlets to build positive public awareness about the school nutrition programs and school nutrition professionals, as well as reach out to current and prospective SNA members.

We encourage you to also tell your stories through social media. As more and more people turn to platforms like Facebook and Twitter for news and information, the more important it is for your program to participate on these sites.

Don't be afraid to use these tools. They are very easy to use – and are free! To help you get started, this manual will focus on how to use two of the most common social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. Look for future versions of this guide to cover other social media platforms.

# How to Use Social Media

## Facebook 101

The purpose of this section is to give you a basic overview of how Facebook operates and how to set up a successful Facebook account. Like all social media applications, you should experiment and play around with the site in order to successfully learn how to use it.

*Note: Facebook is continually changing the way its accounts operate. The information contained in this guide is current as of publication. (September 2010)*

### What Kind of Page Do I Need?

Before you begin to set up your Facebook account, you need to know what kind of page you want. While Facebook pages look similar, there are some differences between them.

#### **Personal Profile**

Your personal profile is a page specifically about you. This page lists the personal information you have chosen to share on Facebook, as well as your activities on the site. You can access your profile page by clicking on the “Profile” link in the top right corner of the Facebook page when you are logged into your account. Your personal profile page includes features such as:

- **Your Wall** – Information about your most recent Facebook activities is posted here. You can also view notes posted by your friends.
- **Status Update** – This is the box at the top of the page asking you “What’s on your mind?” In this box, you can write information updating your status or literally say what’s on your mind. You can also share videos, links, and other linkable content.
- **Other Tabs** – Right above the what’s on your mind box you will find a list of other tabs that display information about you. These tabs can include Info (your profile information), Photos (any pictures you want displayed), Boxes (any other applications you want linked to your profile), Events, and Contests.

#### **Official Pages**

An Official Page is for businesses, organizations, and public figures. You might consider creating an official page for your school nutrition program. Facebook

users “like” an official page by clicking the “Like” button next to the page name. (Circled in yellow below).



These pages are typically found either by searching for the organization’s name, seeing them listed on a friend’s profile, or seeing them in the Suggestions Area on your home page. Once you “like” an official page, any updates from that page are posted to the Newsfeed on your home page. You can access the official pages you “like” at any time by clicking on the “Info” tab on your personal profile or by searching for them.

## Groups

Group pages can be started by any Facebook user and can be on any topic. There are thousands of groups on Facebook and they range from serious (dedicated to supporting breast cancer research) to ridiculous (promoting Lady Gaga for President). To find a group, search for a particular topic or keyword (i.e. school lunch) in the search box and then click on “Groups” when the search results appear. You can also view and join the groups that are listed on your

friends' pages. Group pages can be open and accept members of the general public, they can be private and by invitation only, or they can be secret (members must be invited and it will not show up in a search).

### **Official Pages vs. Groups**

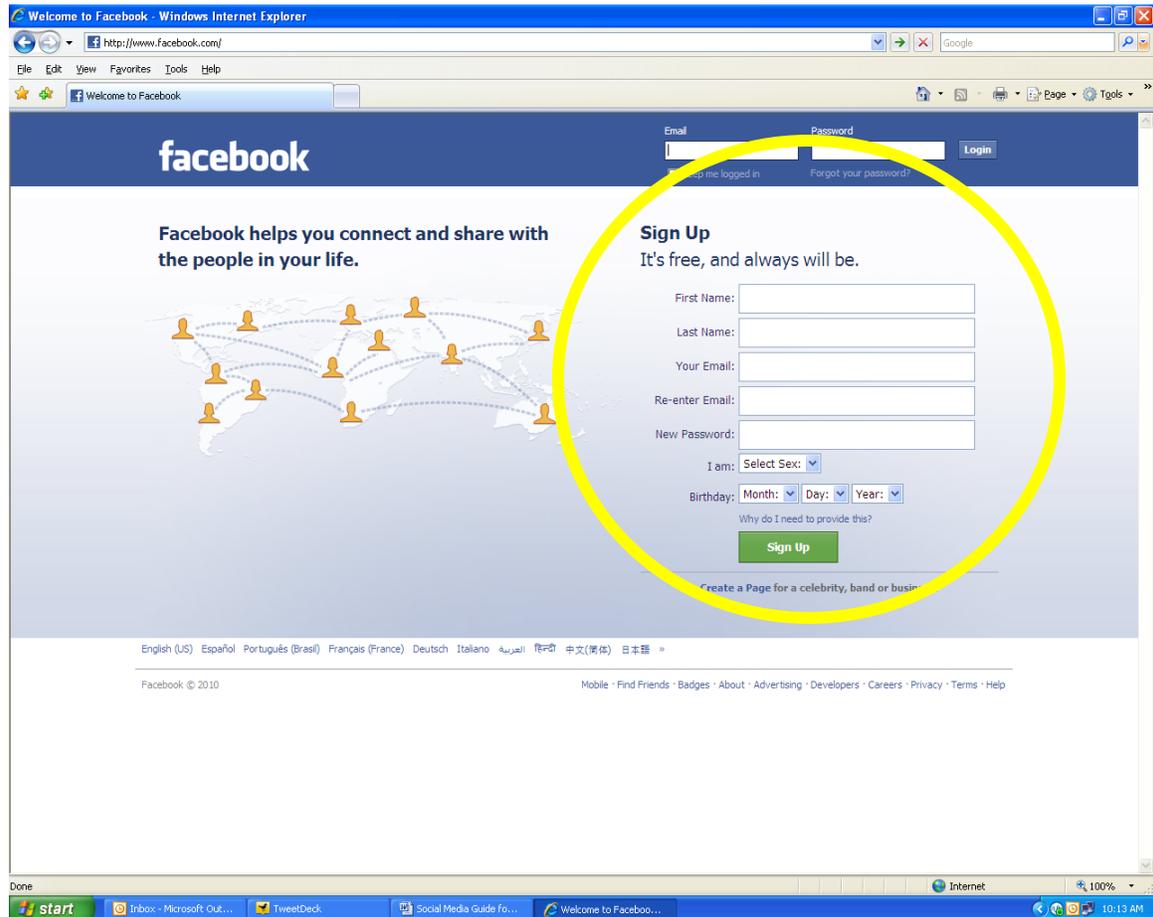
Depending on your organization's needs, you may decide to create either an official page or a group. Here are some things to keep in mind as you determine which page is best:

- Groups are best used for more personal interactions. Facebook considers groups to be an extension of an individual user.
- In contrast, official pages are designed to act like an individual Facebook user's page.
- Groups are administered by an individual user. Any actions that user takes within the group is reflected on their personal page.
- Content created on an official page is attributed to that page, not the individual user.
- Groups can send email messages to up to 5,000 people, official pages cannot.
- Updates to people that "like" an official page are unlimited. Additionally, there is no limit on how many people can "like" a page.
- Groups are more like a private club. You can set a number of different parameters to restrict access.
- Official pages are more open to the public and you can only restrict access by age or location.

Mashable.com, a news source for information about social media technologies, notes that groups are great for smaller scale interactions around a specific cause. Official pages are better for organizations, companies, and brands.

For more information on the difference between public profiles and groups, check out this article from Mashable: <http://mashable.com/2009/05/27/facebook-page-vs-group/> *Note: A "fan" page is the same as an official page. In Summer 2010, Facebook changed the language from becoming a "fan" of a page to "liking" a page.*

## Registering for a Facebook Page



### Creating a Personal Page

1. Go to [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com).
2. In the “Sign Up” section (circled in the above picture), enter in your first name, last name, email password, gender and birthday. Then hit the sign up button!
3. You will then be prompted to enter in two words shown in a graphic for security purposes.
4. Once you enter in this information, you will then receive a verification email at the address you used to set up the account. Go to your email and verify the account through the link included in the email message.
5. After verifying your account information, you will be returned to Facebook. Once back on the Facebook website, you will be directed to begin filling out your profile and finding friends.
6. It is very easy to search Facebook for friends, colleagues and organizations. In the search box across the top of the page, just enter in the names you are looking for. Be sure to look for “School Nutrition

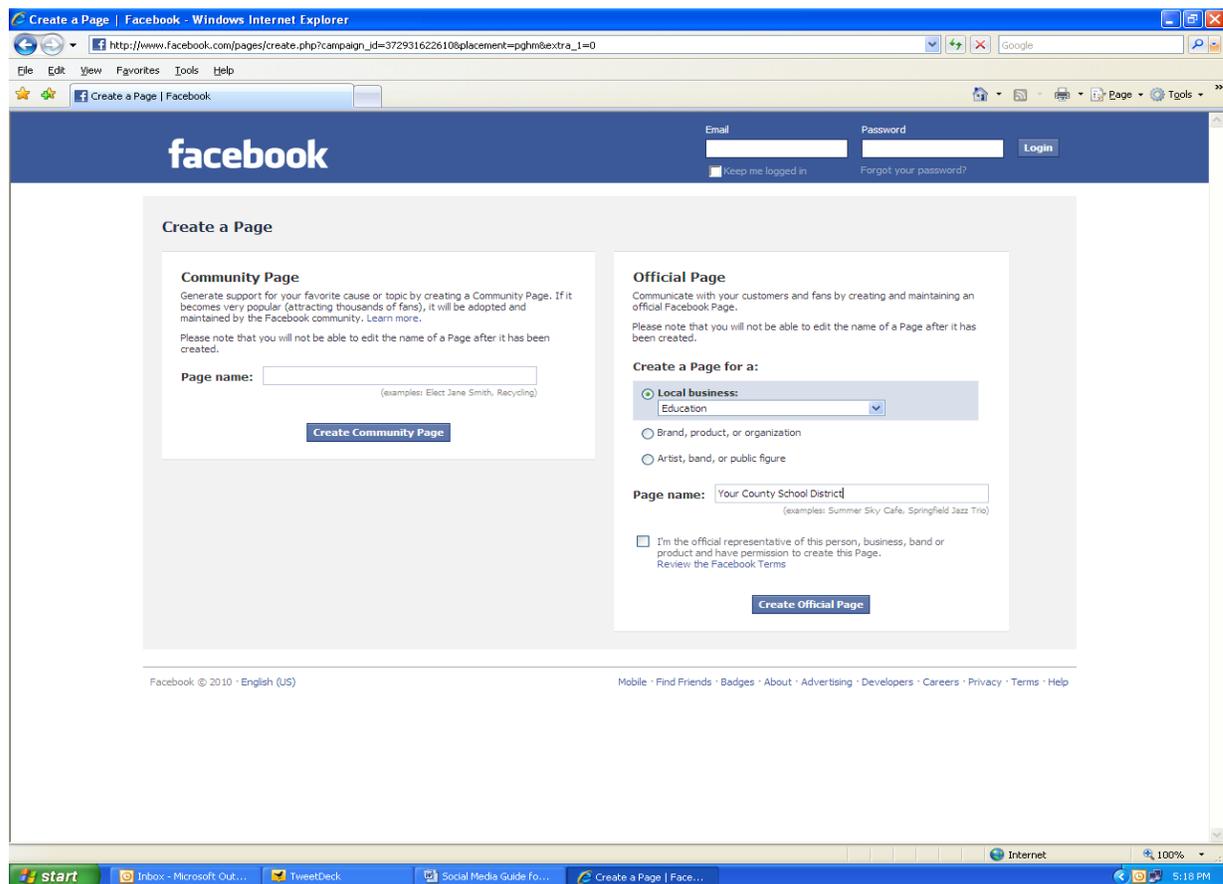
Association,” “School Nutrition Foundation,” and “Global Child Nutrition Foundation.”

7. The names you search will come up in a list. If you want to “like” an organization, click on the “like” link. If you want to become a friend of an individual, click on the “add as friend” link.

**Setting your privacy settings:** Once you set up your page, click on the Account arrow in the upper right hand corner. In the drop down tab, select privacy settings. There you can determine what information your friends and other individuals can see on your Facebook page. For more on public vs. private information, see page 10.

## Creating an Official Page

1. Go to [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com).
2. Click on the “Create a Page” link below the “Sign Up” button.
3. Once the page opens, click the circle next to “Local Business.” This is in the right column under the heading “Official Page.”
4. Select “education” from the drop down tab.
5. Enter your school nutrition program’s name in the page name box.
6. The click on “Create Official Page.”



## **Finding Friends on Facebook**

Now that you've set up your personal Facebook page, your next step is to find your friends. It's very easy to locate friends on Facebook. See below for a few different ways you can search for your friends.

### **Friends Tab**

In the upper left corner of your Facebook home page, click on the "Friends" link. On the next page will be a series of options for finding friends.

- **By email** – Facebook can search for your friends through your email address book. Simply enter your email address and password. If you choose to use this option, Facebook will not store your password.
- **People You May Know** – Facebook will create a list of people you may be connected to based on the people you are currently friends with. All you need to do is click on the "add as a friend" link.
- **Search for people** – You can enter in the names or email address of people you know to see if they are active on Facebook. Facebook will also list links that will send you to a list of individuals from your high school, college, or place of employment, if you list that information in your profile.
- **People you IM** – If you use an instant messaging service, such as AOL Instant Messenger, Skype, or Windows Messaging, you can import contacts from those lists.

### **Friends of Friends**

Another great place to search for friends is to look at the friends of your current Facebook friends. Just click on their profile to see who they are friends with.

### **Adding Facebook Friends**

It is really easy to friend individuals on Facebook. Simply click on the name of the individual you would like to friend. That link will open up a limited view of their Facebook profile. Click on the "Add as Friend" link next to their name. A friend request will be sent to them. Once they accept, they will appear in your list of friends and you will receive a notification via email.

You will receive a friend request if an individual who is not currently friends with you asks to friend you. The request will be sent to your email account. You can also find friend requests by clicking on the "Messages" link in the upper left corner of your home page. Just click on "accept" to list them as a friend.

## **Public vs. Private on Facebook**

For the inexperienced Facebook user, the amount of information that can be made public is intimidating. Fortunately, you can control the information you want to be seen by the general public and the information you want available only to your friends. When you log into your Facebook account, click on the “Account” link in the upper right hand corner. From there you can access links that will allow you to alter your privacy settings. One thing to keep in mind about Facebook, the default setting for most information is public.

### **Public Information**

- **Posts to the Newsfeed** – This information is almost always public. Whenever you post something or make a change to your home page, it can be viewed by your friends on your Newsfeed. Anytime a friend comments on a post in your Newsfeed those comments can also be seen in their friend’s Newsfeed (depending upon their security settings).
- **Posts on a Wall** – Posts or comments that you post on your wall can be viewed by your friends. If you leave messages on friend, group, or official page walls or discussion boards, those can also be seen by those friends or group members.
- **Comments** – Comments you leave on a friend’s post can be viewed by anybody who is friends with your friend. When you post a comment on an official or group page, that comment is also viewable by your friends or anyone who has access to that group or official page.
- **Friending and “Likes”** – Your friends and their friends can see when you “Like” a posting. They can also see when when you become friends with another person. However, if you “de-friend,” block, or ignore another user, Facebook will not make that public.
- **Photos** – Any photos that you post are viewable by all of your friends by default. If you tag individuals in your photos or if your friends comment on them, the photos will be seen by their friends. You can untag yourself from any photo by clicking the photo and selecting the untag option. You can also set your photo privacy settings by clicking on the Privacy Settings under the Settings tab in the upper right portion of your home page.
- **Notes** – Facebook users can write a note on any subject that will be linked to their profile. Notes are published to your Newsfeed, where

## Private Information

While most of the information that is posted to Facebook is public by default, there are a few settings that Facebook users can use to keep correspondence and information private.

- **Chat** – The Chat feature is a built-in instant messaging system. It allows you to have real time conversations with friends that may be on Facebook at the same time. To access the Chat feature, click on the Chat link in the bottom right portion of the page. A box will open that shows which friends are currently online.

Click on your friend's name to chat with them. Type your message into the box at the bottom of the chat window and press "Enter" to send your message.

You can make yourself either visible or invisible by using the "Options" button. Click on either "online" or "offline" to make yourself visible or invisible.

- **Inbox** – Each user has their own inbox on Facebook. You can access your inbox by clicking the "Inbox" link at the top of the Facebook page. Just like using any email software, click on the "Compose Message" link to write your message. To send the message, enter your friend's name in to the "To" field. You can send messages to an unlimited amount of friends. You can also send messages directly to any Friends Lists you may have. Just type the name of your list into the "To" field.

This just scratches the surface of what is public and private on Facebook. For a more indepth look, check out the Ohio Farm Bureau's excellent social media guide. You can find information on public vs. private on page 10. Click here for a link to the guide: [http://ofbf.org/uploads/Social-Media-Guide-V2\\_single-pages-PRESS.pdf](http://ofbf.org/uploads/Social-Media-Guide-V2_single-pages-PRESS.pdf)

## **How the Facebook NewsFeed Works**

Using the NewsFeed properly is the key to success on Facebook. The NewsFeed is a section of Facebook that documents all activity made by Facebook users you follow. When you sign into your Facebook account, you will see a list of the actions your Facebook friends have made that day. The Newsfeed is also the location that businesses and organizations can post updates and information for individuals that “like” their page. Visit SNA’s official Facebook page for an example:

<http://www.facebook.com/SchoolNutritionAssociation>

The NewsFeed section updates in real time, so all posts are live. If you have the page open for a long period of time, a link will appear that says “Show X new posts.” If you click on that link, it will post any new updates that have occurred. Facebook also archives older posts. To view those, just click on the “Older Posts” link at the bottom of the NewsFeed.

### **Filtering Information on the NewsFeed**

There is a lot of information that comes across the on the NewsFeed. Fortunately, it is very easy to filter the information that appears on the NewsFeed.

To hide an application or user from your Newsfeed, just hover your mouse over the top of the post that you want to hide. A box will pop up that says “Hide.” When you click on the “Hide” box, you will be given two options. You can either “hide the application” to keep an application like a game or a quiz from appearing in your NewsFeed. You can also select “hide user” to block that user’s updates.

You can unhide any user or application by selecting the “Edit Options” link at the bottom of the page.

### **Filter Lists**

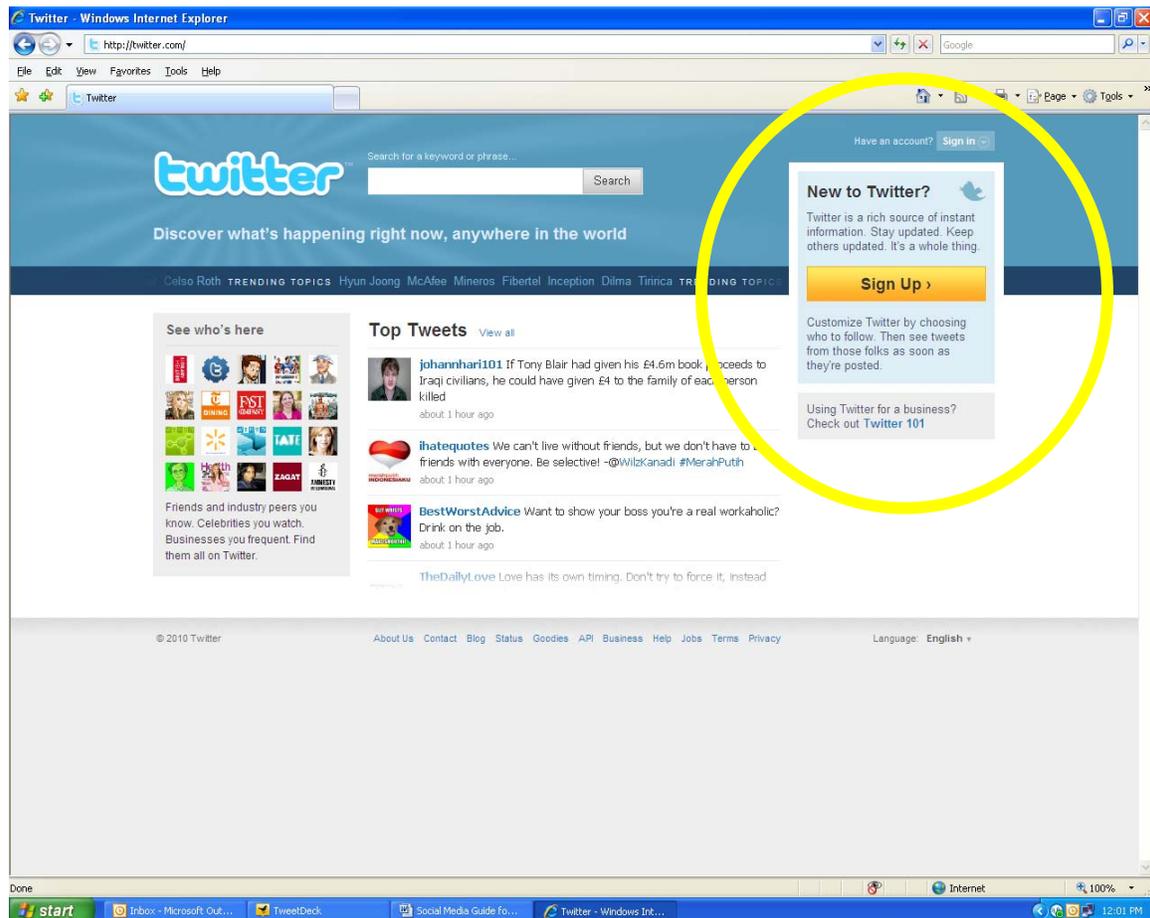
You can also sort the information on your NewsFeed by using the Filter Lists feature. On the left side of the NewsFeed is a list of filters you can choose. Select the ones you wish to use to filter the information.

# Twitter 101

## What is Twitter?

Twitter is a microblogging website. What that means is that users can post short (140 character) messages to their accounts. The posts can include links to pictures and websites.

## Registering for a Twitter Account



1. Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and click on the “Sign-Up” button on the front page. (Circled in the graphic above.)
2. Enter your full name or the name of your school nutrition program (i.e. Anywhere Town School Nutrition Dept.), username, password, and email address. After that, click the “create your account” button. *A note on usernames: Make sure that your username is reflective of your school nutrition program in some way, such as @HooverCNP*

3. Once you set your account, it is very easy to find people to follow. Click on the “Find People” link, then enter in the names you would like to find. Be sure to follow @SchoolLunch!
4. When you find a name you want to follow, click on “follow” to receive updates.

## **What Does that Say?: Understanding Tweets**

For the novice user, Twitter appears to have its own language. Let’s breakdown this 140 character message:

**SchoolLunch:** RT@USDAgov: RT@USDA\_AMS\_NEWS: USDA Offers Produce Safety Course to School Districts, <http://bit.ly/antU8Q> #foodsafety #schoolunch

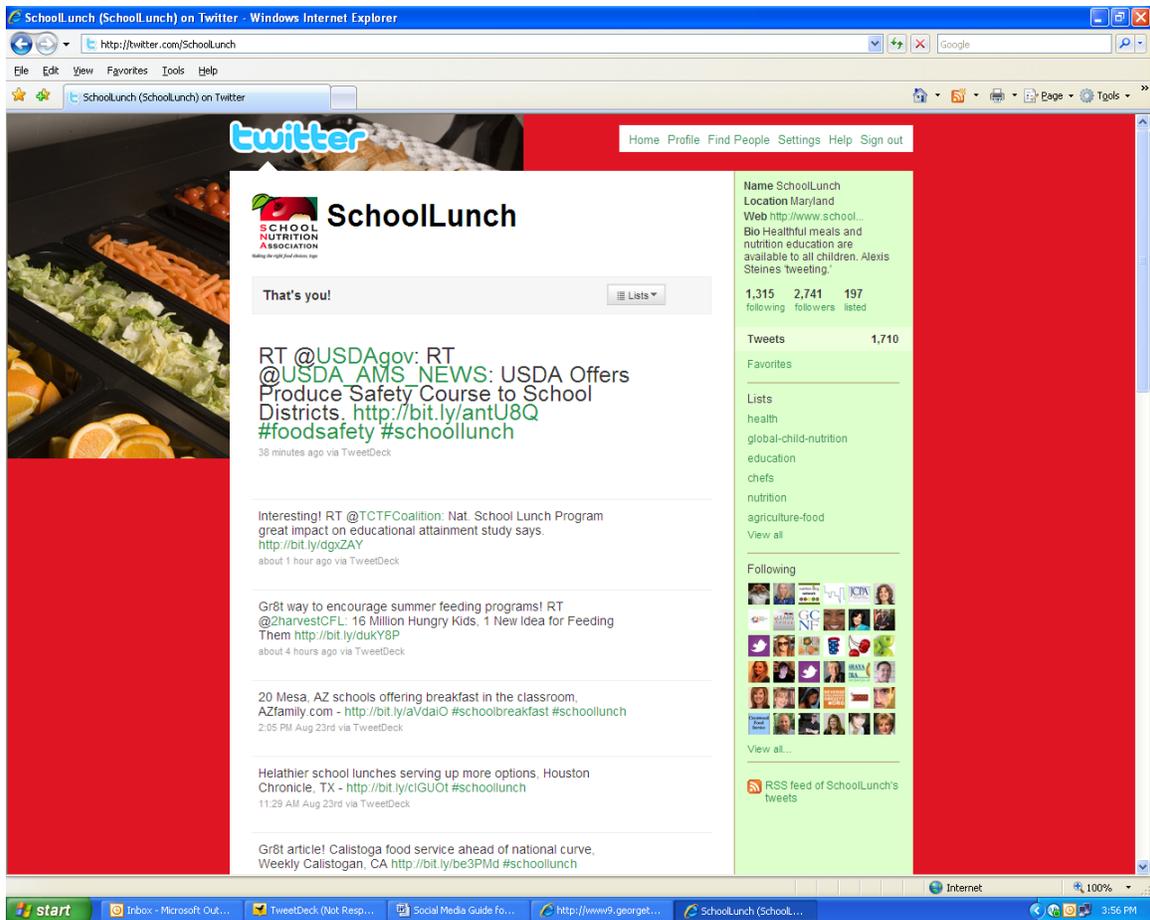
**@SchoolLunch** – This is the username of the Twitter account that this message is sent from. @SchoolLunch is SNA’s Twitter account. You do not need to type your user name into the beginning of the tweet – Twitter will do it automatically for you.

**RT** – “RT” stands for retweet. Retweets are Twitter messages that are forwarded from one user to another, much like forwarding an email. In this case, this message has been retweeted by two different Twitter accounts. When you forward a tweet, you should put RT in front of the username.

**@USDAgov and @USDA\_AMS\_NEWS** – These are the usernames for two U.S. Department of Agriculture Twitter accounts. Put the @ sign in front of the username when referring to another user. That allows other followers to click on the username and see that user’s profile.

**<http://bit.ly/antU8Q>** - This is the link that @USDA\_AMS\_NEWS is tweeting in it’s Twitter message. Since Twitter only allows messages of 140 characters to be sent, most web addresses must be shortened. You can shorten a web address by using a service such as <http://bit.ly/> or <http://tinyurl.com/>. The shortened web address still connects to the original web page.

**#foodsafety and #schoolunch** – These are called hashtags. A hashtag is a word with a # symbol in front of it. Some Twitter users will include a hashtag within or at the end of their tweet to make it searchable. Other users will then search for that particular hashtag to see the conversation. Try searching for #schoolunch in the search box on your Twitter home page to see how this works.



## Types of Tweets

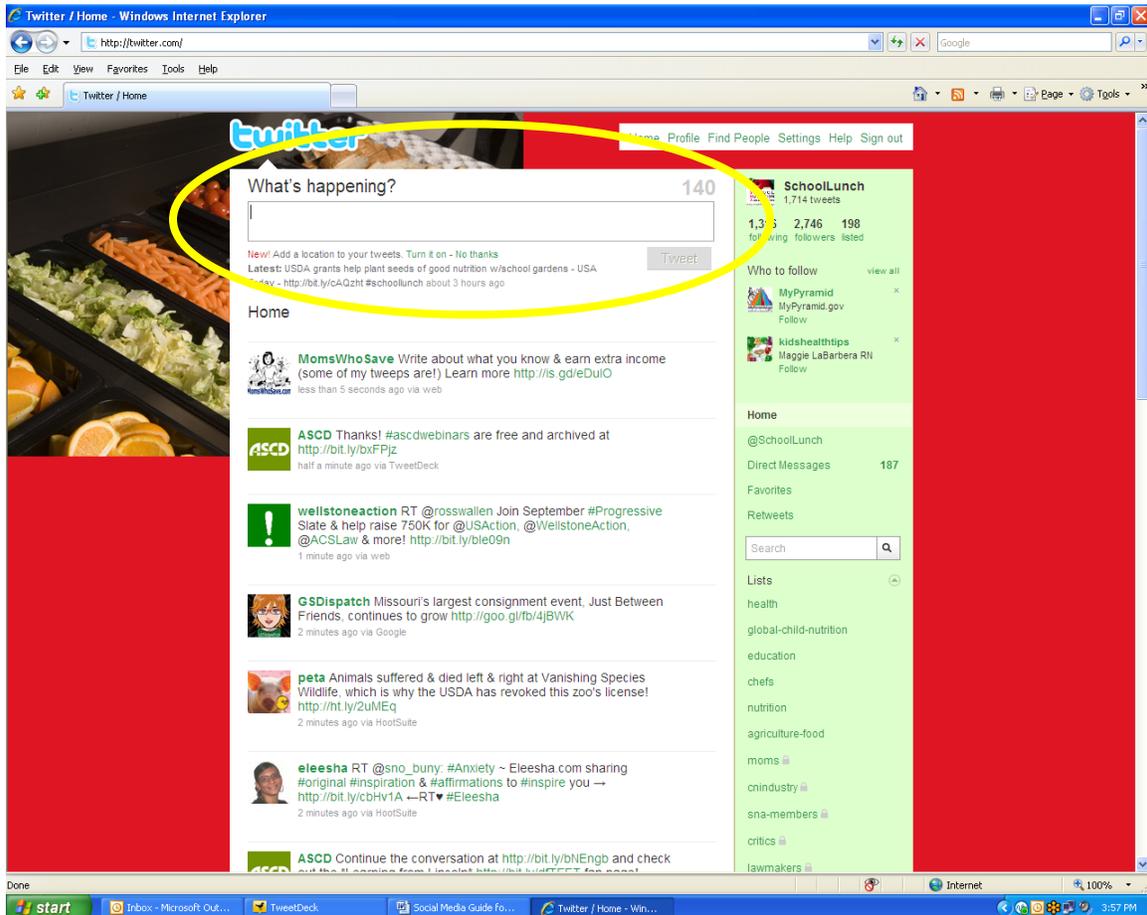
Now that you've mastered the language, let's learn about the different kinds of tweets you can use on Twitter. Examples and definitions are listed below.

**Regular Tweets** – A regular tweet is the typical Twitter message you will send. These tweets are public, so it can be seen on your Twitter profile. It can also be searched for and retweeted. All tweets are archived and saved on your Twitter page, so once you tweet it, it's out there.

To send a regular tweet, type your message into the box below the "What's happening?" question on your Twitter home page. (Circled in yellow below) You can include anything you want in your message, just make sure that it is 140 characters or less. Below is an example of a message you might send.

Example: @SchoolLunch: USDA grants help plant seeds of good nutrition w/school gardens - USA Today - <http://bit.ly/cAQzht> #school lunch

To retweet, just hover your cursor over the tweet until a link that reads “retweet” appears. Click on the link and the tweet will be retweeted!



**Reply Tweets** – These tweets are used when replying to a post or addressing another user publically. Like a regular tweet, reply tweets can be searched by other users and they are archived on your Twitter profile page. To send a reply tweet, enter your message into the same box circled above.

Examples: From @SNAMeetings: @SchoolLunch – Do you have a link to the Tray Talk website?

From @SchoolLunch: @SNAMeetings – here’s the link – [www.traytalk.org](http://www.traytalk.org)

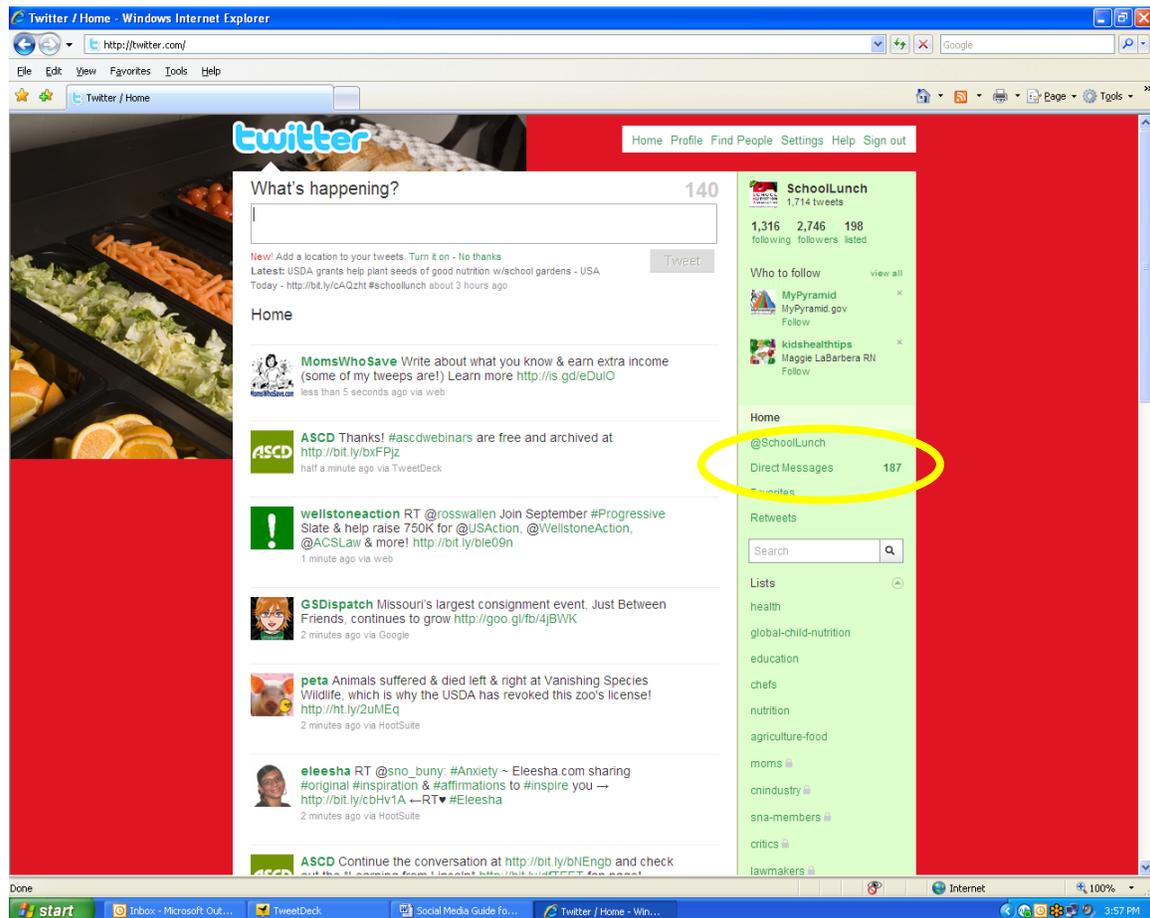
**Direct Messages** – Direct messaging is Twitter’s version of an email service. It is the only way to send a private message through Twitter. Direct messages are only viewable by the individuals sending and receiving the message. They cannot be searched for and they are not archived for the public on your Twitter account’s profile page. Direct messages can only be sent by individuals that following each other.

To send a direct message, type the letter d followed by a space and the username without the @ sign in front of it.

Example: d SNAMeetings: What are the dates for ANC Nashville?

To check your direct messages, click on the “Direct Message” link on the right side of your Twitter homepage. (Circled in yellow below) The direct messages sent to you will appear in a list below.

You can also send a direct message by selecting the “message username” link under their profile information.



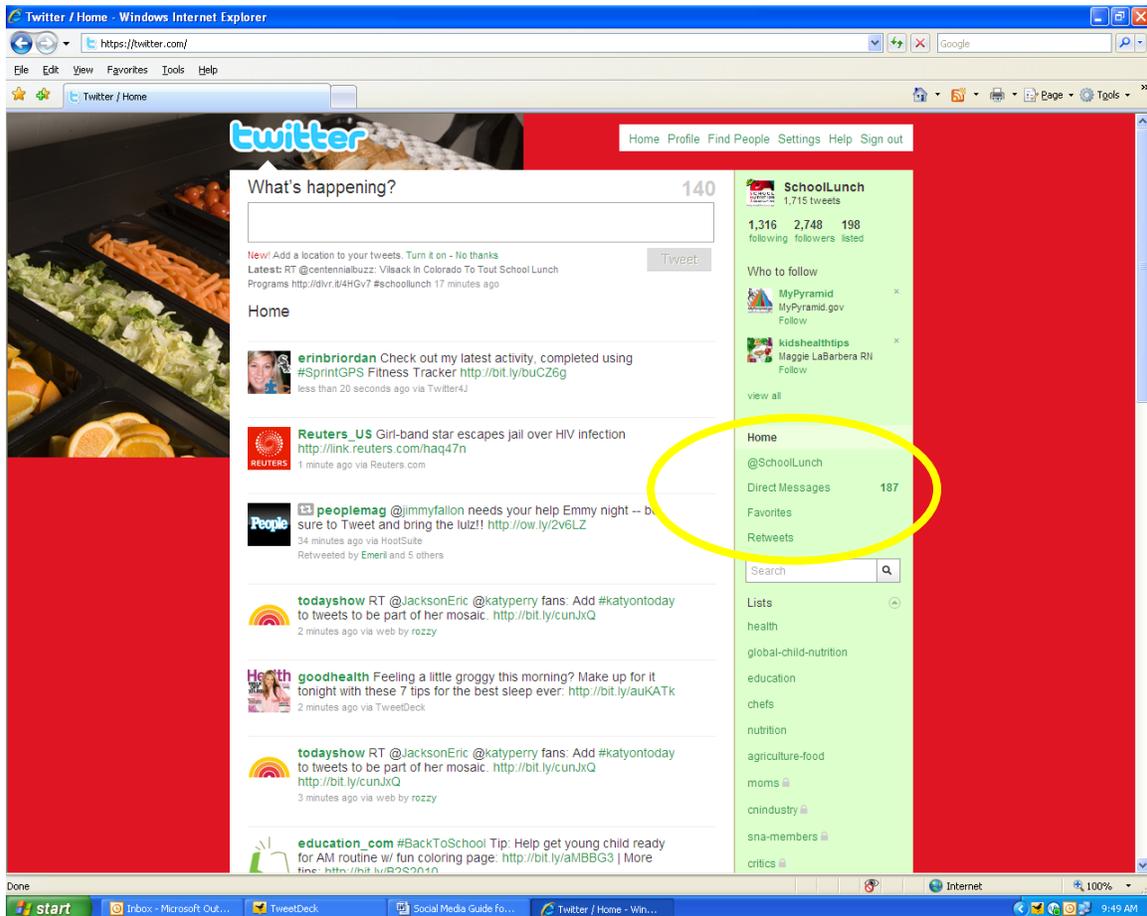
## Viewing Tweets

Now that you have the basics down for interpreting and sending tweets, how do you look at tweets sent by others?

**Home** – From your Twitter account’s home page section, you can view the tweets sent out by the individuals you follow. Tweets are listed from newest to oldest. Click on the “More” button at the bottom of the page to view older tweets.

**Profile** – Your profile is the place to see all of the tweets you have sent. Again, click the “More” button at the bottom of the page to view older tweets.

**@Username** – Click on the link with your username (i.e. @SchoolLunch) to view any reply tweets addressed to you or any tweets that mention your username. This link is located on the right side of the page. (Circled in yellow)



**Direct Messages** – Click on the link below your username to view all direct messages sent to or from your account. You will also receive an email if a direct message is sent to you.

**Favorites** – You can save tweets that you want to read later by classifying them as “favorites.” To save a tweet as a favorite, click on the star that appears in the right corner when you hover your mouse over the tweet. To view tweets that you have listed as favorites, click on the favorites link in the right hand column on your Twitter home page. (Circled in yellow)

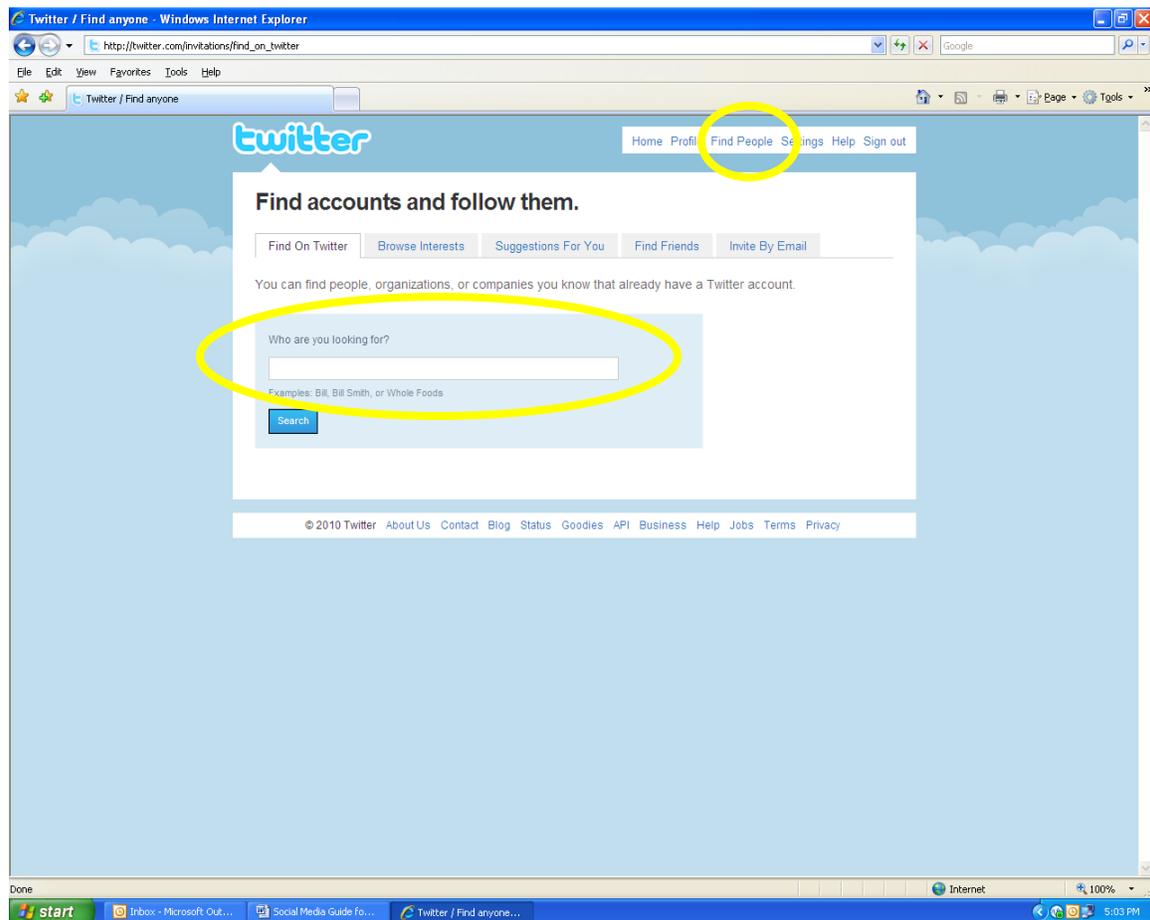
**Retweets** – To see who has retweeted your tweets, click on the Retweets link in the right hand column of you Twitter home page (Circled in yellow). Once the

Retweets page opens, then click on the Your Tweets, Retweeted tab. You can also view tweets that you have retweeted under this tab.

## **Followers and Following**

On Facebook, they are referred to as friends, but on Twitter, they are called followers. These are the individuals who subscribe to, or follow, your tweets. It is very easy to follow people on Twitter.

Once you are logged into Twitter, click on the “find people” tab. (Circled in yellow below.)



There are several different ways you can search for people on Twitter.

If you already know someone’s username, click on the **Find on Twitter** tab (it’s the first one listed). Type in the username, such as @SchoolLunch, in the search box and then click on the “search” button. The @SchoolLunch account should then appear. If you know some of the words that are in the username, type those into the search box (Circled in yellow.). A list of names should then appear. Select the name you wish to add.

You can also search for people through the **Browse Interests** tabs. Just click on the topic that interests you, such as “Food and Drink.” You can then add the people that interest you most.

The **Suggestions for You** tab includes a list of some individuals that the people you follow are following. This tab tries to link up Twitter users with similar interests.

You can also search for people on Twitter by using the **Find Friends** feature. This feature allows you to search for individuals through your contact lists in Gmail, Yahoo, AOL, and LinkedIn.

You can also easily invite friends to Twitter through the **Invite by Email** tab. Just enter in their email addresses and click send. A pre-written email will be sent to them, giving your friends the option of joining.

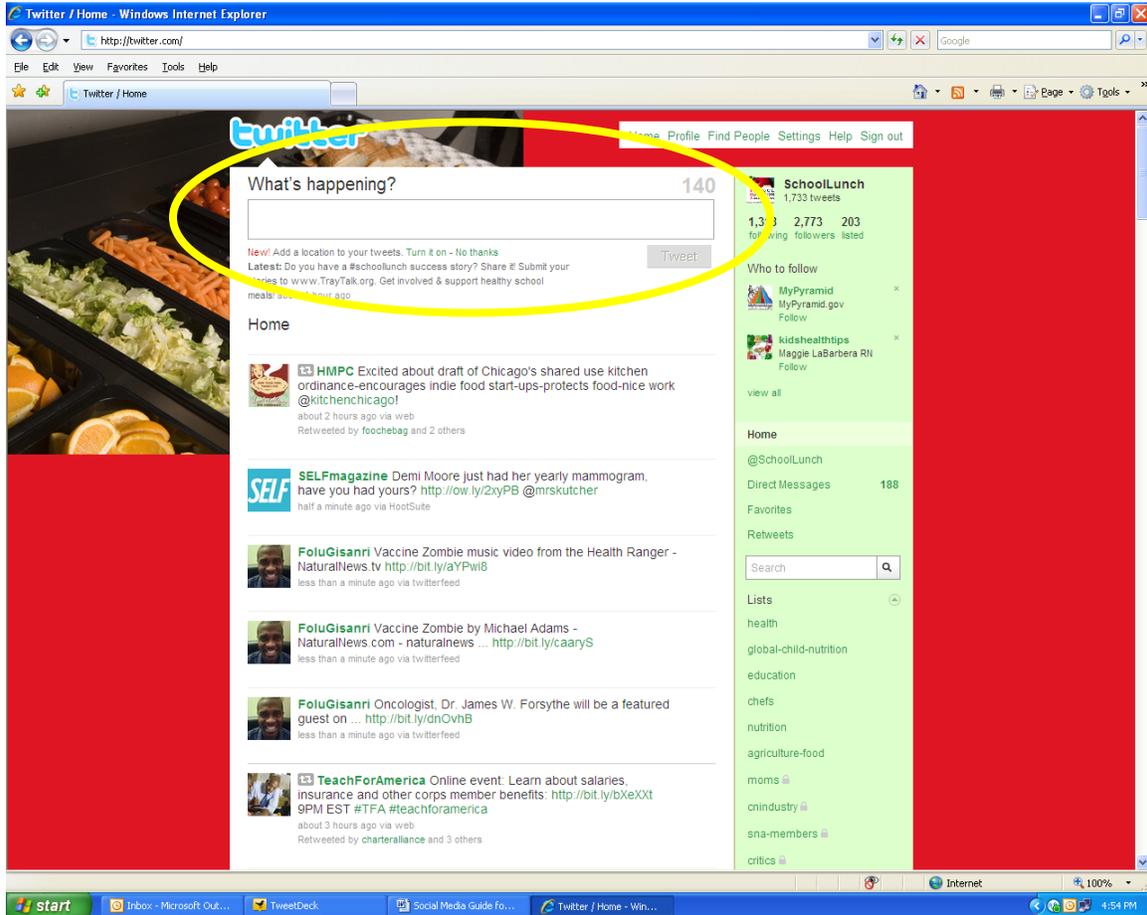
## **How to Tweet**

Twitter asks you to answer a single question, “What’s happening?” There are a number of responses you could give. The Ohio Farm Bureau developed a list of important questions to think about when tweeting:

- What do I care about and why?
- What information or thoughts can I provide my followers that will add value to the reason they follow me?
- What do I do in my field of work that would be of interest to my followers?
- Why are people following me? What are they looking to find from me?
- What content do I find interesting that I can link to and share with my followers?
- What questions do I have for my followers that could help me solve a problem I am working on?
- Does a person I am following have a question that I know an answer to? How can I help?

When you tweet, keep in mind that all of your messages must be 140 characters or *shorter*. Twitter makes it really easy for you to determine the length of your messages. When you type your message into the box under the “What’s Happening” question, a number in the upper right hand corner counts down the characters you have left. If you go over the 140 character limit, the number turns negative. That means you need to shorten your message. Remember, it is okay to shorten words and use special symbols and abbreviations in your tweets. If

you are tweeting a web address that is longer than 140 characters, be sure to shorten it through a URL shortening web site like tinyurl.com.



## **Tips and Tricks on Successful Tweeting**

There is no right or wrong way to use Twitter. One of the beautiful things about this social media application is that you can use it however you want to. Have some fun and experiment with it!

Below are some tips and tricks that you might want to consider when tweeting. Please keep in mind that these are merely *suggestions*.

- **Be conversational.** Twitter is essentially a giant conversation between several million individuals. Don't just promote your own programs and your own thoughts, acknowledge what other individuals are saying through retweets and replies. Showing you are part of the community conversation will attract followers, which in turn will help spread your message.
- **Be authentic.** The Twitter community can tell if you are not an authentic voice. When you tweet, be sure it truly is the voice of your organization that comes through.
- **Give back, share, recognize, reciprocate.** Twitter, like all social media platforms, is a giant online community. Be a good neighbor on Twitter. Be sure to *give back* by tweeting valuable, important and unique information to the community. *Share* with the community your own perspective. Be sure to *recognize* interesting or outstanding contributions to the Twitter community. If you see a tweet you agree with or an idea you think needs to be shared, pass it along. Finally, be sure to *reciprocate*. If someone retweets one of your messages, be sure to pass along one of theirs.
- **It's okay! You want people to follow you!** For those that are not used to social media or internet communication, it may seem awkward to have people following your Twitter account. It's okay! It's completely normal to feel that way. Just remember that having followers on Twitter is what enriches the experience. The individuals who are following you clearly have an interest in what you have to say.
- **And you want to follow people, too!** Be sure to follow individuals that interest you. You will quickly come to find that there are a lot of people on Twitter that share your same interests. Follow them so you can participate in a robust conversation (and gain some followers, too!).
- **Don't feel obligated to follow everyone.** You do not need to follow everyone that follows you. Follow the people you find interesting or

- **Keep your tweets open to the public – Don't lock them.** It is highly recommended that you keep your tweets open to the public. There is a feature on Twitter that allows you to lock your tweets so that only individuals following your Twitter account can see them. Locking your tweets cuts you off from the Twitter community and seriously limits your ability to actively participate.

## **Creating a Social Media Strategy for Your District**

Once you've signed up for and learned to use the popular social media sites, you now need to create a plan for your school district. Whether you are focusing on one social media platform or four, it's a good practice to develop a social media strategy.

Before you begin developing your plan, be sure to consult with your school district's communications department. Your district may have specific rules and regulations regarding social media. Your school district's communications department may have a presence on social media sites and may want you to only use their accounts. The communications department may also have some suggestions for how you can best reach out to parents and students.

### **Determine the Time You Can Commit**

The first thing you need to consider is the amount of time you can commit to maintaining a social media presence. Be realistic, don't overextend yourself. If this is a departmental initiative, you also need to consider resources and staff time.

You likely won't be able to commit to running a campaign on multiple social media network sites. It is okay to start off small and focus on one area.

### **Know Your Audience**

You need ask yourself a few questions about the audience you are trying to reach. Are you using social media to connect with parents in your school district and educate them about healthy school meals? Are you hoping to engage students? Understanding the audience you are trying to reach now and in the future is very important to the success of any social media strategy.

If you are using more than one social media platform, you might have a different audience for each. For example, you may know that your school district's parents are active on Facebook, but not on Twitter. Conversely, your district's high school students might be more active on Twitter. You may choose to direct your Facebook efforts at the parents in your community while reaching out to students through Twitter.

### **Define Your Objectives**

It is important to develop a clear idea of your goals for using social media. What do you hope to accomplish by actively participating on social networks?

Here are some questions to consider as you define your objectives:

- Are you trying to encourage more participation in the programs?
- Are you attempting to send information to parents, i.e. program policies, procedures, application information?
- Are you trying to clear misperceptions about school meals?
- Are you trying to engage students?
- Are you using social media to provide nutrition education?

Setting specific objectives allows you to utilize these social media tools in the best possible way.

### **Create Your Messaging**

Once you define your objectives, you then need to create your messaging. Messaging involves not just what you say, but how you want to say it.

Keep in mind your objectives. They should help guide you in determining what you want to say. If you are trying to educate parents and the community about school meals, you may want to focus on providing details about the meals you serve or what it takes to prepare a school lunch.

Always keep the information you post positive. Do not respond to negative criticism angrily or with negative remarks.

### **Spread the Word – Advertise!**

Let the public know what social media networks your organization is active on! Advertise your Twitter or Facebook account on your program's web page. Include the links to your social media pages on your menus. By discussing your involvement, you will hopefully have more people follow you.

## **Legal Issues Surrounding Social Media**

Over the past several years, active participation on social media platforms has become a necessity for many businesses, school districts, and other organizations. As social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are quickly growing in popularity, many organizations are scrambling to create policies that govern how their employees can utilize these tools. Additionally, the law surrounding the use of social media is still being determined.

Before you become active on any social media platform, you should contact your school district's communications office. (It's a good practice to do this before you engage in any PR campaign.) Ask them if your district has a standing social media policy and what rules and regulations you need to follow, especially when communicating with students.

Here are a few questions to keep in mind:

- Does your district's social media policy prohibit you from reaching out to students?
- Does your district have a centralized account for all social media activity?
- What social media sites are you able to access from your work computer?
- Is there a "social media spokesperson" for the district?
- What electronic notification methods are currently in place to communicate with parents?
- Does the school district have a public blog?

For more information on the legal issues surrounding social media, and for additional information on setting up social media accounts, please be sure to check out the following websites:

- National School Boards Association – [www.nsba.org/tln](http://www.nsba.org/tln)
- Social Media Schools – [www.socialmediaschools.com](http://www.socialmediaschools.com)
- School Lunch 2.0: How Websites like Facebook and Twitter can Revolutionize your School Nutrition Program – School Nutrition Foundation - <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=12947>

## **Social Media Etiquette**

Social media is essentially a conversation between individuals. While it is conducted through a computer and an internet connection, the same rules that apply to a face-to-face conversation apply to social media. By following proper etiquette, you can make sure your social media experience will be successful.

Below are some tips for practicing good etiquette online:<sup>1</sup>

- **Respect the online communities you are participating in** – Nearly every publication on social media etiquette cites this as one of the most important rules to follow. Just as you would in real life, treat others as you want to be treated. By respecting others online, you will be able to earn their respect.
- **Set a positive tone** – Social media sites are supposed to link individuals in conversation, so make sure that you set a positive tone for the conversation. Frame your posts and comments in a way that encourages conversation and discussion of other points of view without angering or disparaging the views of others. If you are disagreeing with another's viewpoint, be sure to keep your comments polite and appropriate.
- **Add value to the site** – Are you posting interesting, informative and useful information, or are you simply posting for the sake of posting? Millions of pages exist online, making it difficult for individuals to sift through and sort all of the information that exists. When you submit something to a social media website, make sure that it adds value to the site. This will encourage your followers to remain engaged and look to you as an authority.
- **Be timely** – Make sure the information you are posting is relevant and current. Monitor the social media networks you participate in daily and make sure that you actively maintain your presence. *Note: You do not need to post something every hour during the day. Make it a part of your routine to post new information in the morning or the afternoon.*
- **Always act professionally** – Keep in mind that the division between personal and professional is blurred in the world of social media. Always maintain a professional presence that keeps in line with your messages and the mission of your department or organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from California State University, Fresno: Social Media Etiquette: [http://www.csufresno.edu/ucomm/standardsmanual/Fresno\\_State\\_SM\\_Etiquette\\_Dec091.pdf](http://www.csufresno.edu/ucomm/standardsmanual/Fresno_State_SM_Etiquette_Dec091.pdf) and The 11 Rules of Social Media Etiquette by Eric Brantner <http://digitallabz.com/blogs/the-11-rules-of-social-media-etiquette.html>

- **Use proper grammar and be sure to proofread!** – When posting something online, be sure to use proper grammar and spelling. *Note: When posting messages to Twitter, it is okay to abbreviate words or use numbers in place of certain letters or words i.e. gr8t for great or 2 for too.* Before you put something on the web, proofread to catch any mistakes.
- **Respect copyrights** – Do not post any copyrighted materials, including photos or copy, without asking the creator’s permission first. If you are granted permission, make sure you properly credit the source.
- **Stay on message** – Write about what you know – in this case, school lunch! Don’t write about things that are off topic or that you do not have expertise in. By staying on message, you maintain your credibility.
- **Be accountable and be honest** – You are ultimately responsible for what you post. When you post something, make sure you have all of the facts. If you make a mistake, be sure to correct it.
- **Be nice!** – Finally, no matter what you post or respond to online, always make sure to be nice.

For additional “rules of etiquette” check out the following site:

The Ultimate Social Media Etiquette Handbook:

<http://www.techipedia.com/2008/social-media-etiquette-handbook/>

## **Useful Social Media Websites**

This guide gives you a basic look at how to use social media tools like Facebook and Twitter. For more in depth information, please be sure to visit the following websites:

### ***School Nutrition Programs & Social Media***

- How Friend Became a Verb – School Nutrition Magazine, February 2010 - <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=13474>
- Sweet Tweets! – School Nutrition Magazine, September 2010 - <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=14396&terms=%22Sweet+Tweets%22>
- School Lunch 2.0: How Websites like Facebook and Twitter can Revolutionize your School Nutrition Program – School Nutrition Foundation – <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=12947>
- National School Boards Association – [www.nsba.org/tln](http://www.nsba.org/tln)
- Social Media Schools – [www.socialmediaschools.com](http://www.socialmediaschools.com)

### ***School Nutrition Programs Using Social Media***

- Oregon Community Unit School District #220, IL - Food Services Facebook Page - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Oregon-IL/Oregon-Community-Unit-School-District-220-Food-Services/401205869777?ref=search#!/pages/Oregon-IL/Oregon-Community-Unit-School-District-220-Food-Services/401205869777>
- Montgomery County Schools, NC Child Nutrition Program – Facebook Page - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Child-Nutrition-Montgomery-County-Schools/113063698843?ref=search>
- Education Service District 12, WA Child Nutrition Program – Facebook page - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Vancouver-WA/ESD-112-Child-Nutrition/197978223180?ref=search>
- Rockwall Independent School District Child Nutrition Program, TX Twitter page - <http://twitter.com/RISDNutrition>
- Hoover City Public Schools Child Nutrition Program, AL Twitter page - <http://twitter.com/HooverCNP>

- Hillborough County Public Schools Child Nutrition Program, FL Twitter page - <http://twitter.com/HCPSNutrition>

### ***Social Media in General***

- Discover Your Social Web: An Ohio Farm Bureau Guide to Social Media - [http://ofbf.org/uploads/Social-Media-Guide-V2\\_single-pages-PRESS.pdf](http://ofbf.org/uploads/Social-Media-Guide-V2_single-pages-PRESS.pdf)
- [www.mashable.com](http://www.mashable.com) – Leading social media news & information website
- A Pocket Guide to Social Media and Kids – Nielsen Wire - <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/consumer/a-pocket-guide-to-social-media-and-kids/>

### ***Social Media Etiquette***

- The Ultimate Social Media Etiquette Handbook - <http://www.techipedia.com/2008/social-media-etiquette-handbook/>
- Social Media Etiquette, California State University, Fresno - [http://www.csufresno.edu/ucomm/standardsmanual/Fresno\\_State\\_SM\\_Etiquette\\_Dec091.pdf](http://www.csufresno.edu/ucomm/standardsmanual/Fresno_State_SM_Etiquette_Dec091.pdf)
- The 11 Rules of Social Media Etiquette by Eric Brantner - <http://digitallabz.com/blogs/the-11-rules-of-social-media-etiquette.html>

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- Ohio Farm Bureau, *Discover Your Social Web: An Ohio Farm Bureau Guide to Social Media* – Original Version, June 2009, accessed July 2010. [http://ofbf.org/uploads/Social-Media-Guide-V2\\_single-pages-PRESS.pdf](http://ofbf.org/uploads/Social-Media-Guide-V2_single-pages-PRESS.pdf) (This links to the most current version of the guide.)
- International Association of Exhibitions and Events, *Social Media Best Practices for Exhibitions and Events*, access September 2010. <http://www.tradeshowstore.com/products/catProductDetail.asp?catProduct=383177&UID=GSTD71758A2040E4960BDC9EBB85685F66F&ClickID=3&schemename=TSS&Referer=no&Redirected=True>
- United States Air Force, *New Media and the Air Force*, accessed July 2010. <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090406-036.pdf>
- Tamar Weinberg, *The Ultimate Social Media Etiquette Handbook*, Techipedia.com, accessed August 2010. <http://www.techipedia.com/2008/social-media-etiquette-handbook/>
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- Eric Branter, *The 11 Rules of Social Media Etiquette*, digitallabs.com, accessed August 2010. <http://digitallabz.com/blogs/the-11-rules-of-social-media-etiquette.html>