

SCPTA Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics for Local PTA Leaders and Volunteers

The South Carolina PTA is committed to promoting a positive, respectful, and ethical environment within all PTA activities. The conduct of PTA members, leaders, and volunteers reflects directly on the mission, values, and reputation of the PTA.

This Code of Ethics establishes the standards of conduct and expectations for ethical behavior and professional responsibility for all individuals participating in PTA activities within local units across South Carolina. All PTA leaders, members, and volunteers are expected to familiarize themselves with and uphold these principles while serving in their roles, participating in PTA activities, and representing the PTA within their communities.

Failure to uphold this Code of Ethics may result in appropriate action by the local PTA board and/or South Carolina PTA leadership in accordance with PTA bylaws, policies, and applicable procedures.

Ethical Standards

Commitment to the PTA Mission

PTA leaders and volunteers shall:

- Support and promote the mission, purposes, and policies of the PTA.
- Place the well-being and success of all children and families at the center of all PTA work.
- Represent the PTA in a positive and professional manner.

Respect and Inclusiveness

PTA members and leaders shall:

- Treat all individuals with dignity, fairness, and respect.
- Foster an inclusive and welcoming environment for all families, students, and community members.
- Encourage open communication and respectful dialogue.

Integrity and Accountability

PTA leaders and volunteers shall:

- Conduct all PTA business honestly, ethically, and responsibly.
- Follow all applicable PTA bylaws, policies, procedures, and state and federal laws.
- Ensure that PTA funds, resources, and property are used appropriately and only for PTA purposes.
- Ensure that individuals serving or nominated for service on the board of directors have not been convicted of fraud, financial misconduct, or other crimes involving dishonesty, and have not been removed from a PTA for cause.

Confidentiality

PTA members and leaders shall:

- Respect the confidentiality of information obtained through PTA involvement.
- Avoid sharing sensitive or private information that is not intended for public distribution.

Nonpartisanship

PTA is a nonpartisan organization. Members and leaders shall:

- Refrain from using the PTA name, meetings, communications, or resources to support or oppose political candidates or political parties.
- Ensure PTA activities remain focused on advocacy for children and education, consistent with PTA policies.

Professional Conduct

PTA leaders and volunteers shall:

- Communicate respectfully in meetings, emails, social media, and public interactions.
- Avoid behavior or actions that could harm the reputation or effectiveness of the PTA.
- Work collaboratively and respectfully with school staff, administrators, families, and community partners.

Commitment to Ethical Conduct

All PTA members, leaders, and volunteers share a responsibility to uphold the values and mission of the PTA. By participating in PTA activities, individuals agree to act in a manner that promotes respect, integrity, and collaboration within the organization.

Working together with professionalism and ethical conduct helps ensure that PTA remains a strong and effective advocate for all children.

Conflict Resolution

South Carolina PTA encourages local units to resolve concerns in a respectful and constructive manner. Most issues can be addressed through open communication and a commitment to collaboration.

Local PTAs should use the following process when addressing conflicts or concerns related to PTA operations, leadership, or conduct.

Step 1: Direct Communication

Whenever possible, individuals should first attempt to resolve concerns through respectful and direct communication.

Participants should:

- Share concerns calmly and respectfully
- Focus on resolving the issue rather than assigning blame
- Seek a mutually acceptable solution

Step 2: Involve the PTA President

If the concern cannot be resolved through direct communication, the matter should be brought to the **PTA President**.

The President may:

- Meet with the individuals involved
- Clarify PTA policies or expectations
- Facilitate a respectful discussion aimed at resolution

If the concern involves the President, the matter should be directed to the **Vice President or another executive board officer**.

Step 3: Executive Board Review

If the issue remains unresolved, the matter may be reviewed by the **PTA Executive Board**.

The Executive Board may:

- Review relevant bylaws and policies
- Meet with the individuals involved
- Determine appropriate next steps to address the situation

Step 4: Contact District PTA Leadership

If the concern cannot be resolved at the local level, the local unit may request assistance from their **District PTA leadership**.

District leaders may:

- Provide guidance based on PTA policies and procedures
- Facilitate discussion between the parties involved
- Offer recommendations to help resolve the issue

Step 5: Seek Guidance from South Carolina PTA

If the issue remains unresolved after working with District leadership, the local unit may request guidance from the **South Carolina PTA**.

South Carolina PTA may:

- Provide procedural guidance
- Offer mediation support when appropriate
- Recommend actions consistent with PTA policies and bylaws

South Carolina PTA reserves the right to intervene when necessary to protect the integrity of the organization or ensure compliance with PTA policies and bylaws.

Social Media Conduct Guidelines for Local PTAs

Social media can be a valuable tool for sharing information, celebrating achievements, and engaging families in the work of the PTA. The South Carolina PTA encourages local units to use social media responsibly and in a way that reflects the mission and values of the PTA.

All PTA leaders, members, and volunteers should use social media in a respectful and professional manner when representing or discussing PTA activities.

General Expectations

PTA members and leaders should:

- Communicate respectfully and professionally in all online interactions.
- Use social media to promote PTA programs, events, and initiatives in a positive way.
- Be mindful that posts, comments, and messages made online can reflect on the reputation of the PTA and the school community.
- Follow all school district policies regarding social media and student privacy.

Respectful Communication

When using social media in connection with PTA activities, individuals should:

- Avoid posting or sharing content that is disrespectful, offensive, or inflammatory.
- Refrain from engaging in arguments or personal disputes online.
- Address concerns or disagreements through appropriate PTA channels rather than public posts.
- Remember that tone and intent can easily be misunderstood in written communication.

PTA social media platforms should **not be used to criticize, attack, or publicly complain about teachers, school staff, administrators, students, or families**. Concerns related to school matters should be addressed directly through the school administration.

Protecting Privacy

PTA leaders and members should take care to protect the privacy of students, families, and school staff.

Individuals should:

- Avoid sharing personal information about students or families without permission.
- Ensure that photos of students are shared only in accordance with school policies and with appropriate consent.
- Avoid posting confidential or sensitive information related to PTA business.

Conflict of Interest

PTA social media platforms should not be used in ways that could create a **real or perceived conflict of interest**.

PTA leaders and members should:

- Avoid promoting personal businesses, services, or financial interests through PTA social media accounts.
- Refrain from posting content that could be interpreted as using the PTA platform for personal gain.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest when relevant to PTA activities.

Nonpartisanship

PTA is a nonpartisan organization. PTA social media accounts and platforms should not be used to:

- Support or oppose political candidates or political parties.
- Promote partisan political messaging.

Advocacy related to issues affecting children and education should align with PTA positions and policies.

Representing the PTA

Official PTA social media accounts should be managed by individuals authorized by the local PTA.

Those managing accounts should:

- Share accurate and appropriate information about PTA programs and activities.
- Ensure posts reflect the values and mission of the PTA.
- Use sound judgment when posting content that may impact the reputation of the PTA or school community.

Authorized administrators of PTA social media platforms **reserve the right to remove posts or comments that violate these guidelines or that are deemed inappropriate, disrespectful, or inconsistent with the mission and values of the PTA.**

Addressing Concerns

If concerns arise regarding social media posts or online conduct related to the PTA, local units should address the issue using the **Conflict Resolution Process outlined in the South Carolina PTA Code of Ethics.**