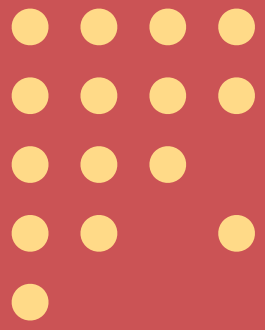


# Professionalism in the Digital Age: Protect Your Online Presence



**What is the Problem?** Sharing too much personal information online can quickly blur the lines between your personal and professional life, putting your reputation—and even your career—at risk.

## 1 Impact on Teaching and Learning:

**Loss of Trust:** Oversharing personal opinions or inappropriate content can lead to a breakdown in trust with students, parents, and colleagues.

**Job Risk:** Teachers need to ensure that posts, pins, and pictures do not undermine a high standing or professional integrity. (McGarrigle, 2017)

**Student Role Model:** Teachers who engage in irresponsible online behavior set a poor example for students, undermining lessons on digital citizenship.

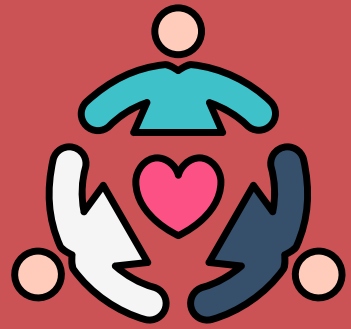


## 2 Recognizing the Problem:

**Inappropriate Posts:** Sharing personal opinions or sensitive information (e.g., politics, religion) that could be controversial or divisive.

**Blurring Boundaries:** Accepting friend requests from students or sharing too many personal details (e.g., family life, vacation photos).

**Unprotected Accounts:** Public social media profiles open to students, parents, or the public without privacy settings in place. When you set up social media accounts, you may want to use a nickname or just part of your real name. (Jabarova, 2024)



## 3 Strategies to Overcome the Problem:

**Set Clear Boundaries:** Use school-sanctioned platforms for professional communications, and maintain separate personal accounts with strong privacy settings. Even change the settings so that your profiles are not listed by search engines. (McGarrigle, 2017)

**Monitor Digital Footprint:** Never assume that content you share online is private. It is so easy to copy digital content that once you post content online you lose control of who sees that content and how it is used. (McGarrigle, 2017)

**Engage in Professional Development:** Stay updated on ethical online behavior by attending workshops or completing online courses. If you have to be social, consider setting up a Personal Learning Network, which is a way of describing the group of people that you connect with to learn their ideas, their questions, their reflections, and their references. (TeachThought, 2023)

