

facebook

for Educators

Facebook Groups

[Facebook Groups](https://www.facebook.com/groups) (facebook.com/groups) are an online space where people can interact and share with others. It's a great way for students to work on collaborative projects with each other, communicate with parents or create a Personal Learning Network (PLN) with your colleagues.

When it comes to using Facebook Groups with students, it's worth noting that you don't need to be Facebook friends with someone to interact with them in Facebook Groups. When non-friends are in the same group as you, this does not allow them to see any more of your profile information that your privacy settings allow.

Think of Facebook Groups as an opportunity for you to extend learning outside the walls of the traditional classroom. When you use Facebook Groups to complement what you teach in the classroom, you are providing students with on-demand and mobile learning opportunities.

Privacy on Facebook Groups

There are three types of Facebook Groups:

- **Secret:** Only members can see the group and what members post.
- **Closed:** Everyone can see the group. Only members see posts
- **Open (public):** Everyone can see the group and what members post.

In an educational setting, we suggest you create Groups that are "Closed," not "Open." This means the content of the group is private, available only to members of the group. This helps protect the privacy of your students.

It's important to note that in "closed" groups, your Facebook Groups membership list is visible to outsiders, but the content is not. You can change the privacy settings for your group by clicking the "Edit Settings" box located in the top right corner of Facebook Groups.

Managing Facebook Groups

When you set up Facebook Groups you become the administrator (“admin”) for the group. You don’t have to friend someone to invite them to join your group and you can confirm requests from people who’ve requested to join.

For all types of Groups (open, closed, secret), group members can add their friends, so be aware that students may add others to the group without getting teacher approval.

Teachers, as admins, can always remove someone from a group, and doing so means that the person must request permission to re-join (and cannot be added back by a group member). Admins can also ban people from Groups permanently.

Facebook Groups Features

- **Group Docs:** This feature allows people to collectively write and edit notes with one another. Similar to a wiki, they can be viewed and edited by all members of a group, and any group member may add or remove sections of the Doc.
- **Group Chat:** This feature allows members of the group to talk to group members in real time, or catch up with the conversation later. To chat with members of a group, first go to the group. Then, select the chat option from the Actions menu on the right-hand side of the page.
- **Group Privacy:** When you create a group, **you can completely control its privacy.** There are three different access levels: Open, Closed, Secret. You can learn more about each of these privacy settings in the [Facebook Help Center](#).
- **Facebook Questions:** This feature allows you or students to poll members of your group and have them share their opinions or add a new question of their own. This is a opportunity for students to share what they know and learn from their peers. You can learn more at Facebook.com/questions (<http://www.facebook.com/questions>).
- **Facebook Photo Albums:** This feature allows you to upload a whole set of photos and share privately with just the members of your group. This is a easy way to share pictures from a field trip, visit from a guest speaker or even share a presentation.
- **Facebook Events:** We think this will quickly become one of your favorite features in Facebook Groups! You can use Facebook Events to automatically remind students about upcoming tests, school events, and due dates for term papers or projects.
- **Facebook Send Button:** The Facebook ‘Send’ button is a new feature that allows you to easily and quickly share content you find on the web with any of your Facebook Groups. So say, for example, you find a really good article from the Washington Post

that you want to share with students (or colleagues), just click the “Send” button, enter the name of your group and it will automatically be posted. This is a quick, easy and time saving feature that will help you streamline online learning activities.

Using Facebook Groups to Communicate with Parents

[Facebook Groups](http://www.facebook.com/groups) (<http://www.facebook.com/groups>) can be an effective tool for classroom management and an engaging way to get parents more involved in the classroom.

In the past teachers might have sent home a flyer with students, but it often got lost or forgotten, or eaten by the dog. Teachers can now use tools like the Docs.com App to quickly post flyers or permission slips directly in Facebook Groups and parents will be notified via their news feed.

Facebook Groups are also an easy and effective way to communicate with the broader school community, sharing a school’s online newspaper, sporting event calendar, completed student work, or other information.

Using Facebook Groups for Student Collaboration

Facebook Groups can also provide students with the opportunity to work on group projects and the chance to use technology in a situated context. By doing so, they are developing important 21st Century skills such as learning how to manage information, and work in a collaborative, digital and distributed knowledge environment.

The key here is to set your expectations that they use proper grammar, sentence structure and avoid using abbreviations normally reserved for texting with family and friends.

As they collaborate in Facebook Groups they are also developing their writing skills--using Facebook Docs, Notes and Status Updates--in an authentic context. Moreover, Facebook mobile gives students on-demand, anywhere access to their classroom content and collaborative projects on Facebook Groups.

Using Facebook Groups for Professional Development

We know that you are busy grading papers, managing your classroom and teaching that you don’t always have the time or opportunities you’d like for professional development.

One idea is to create a group for the teachers at your school (or, for example, all the 4th Grade teachers in your district) and use Facebook Groups as an on-demand hub for sharing ideas, resources and best practices. You can use Facebook Questions to gather opinions, Facebook Events to keep everyone informed about upcoming conferences or school events.

How to Report Abuse in Facebook Groups

Before you begin using Facebook Groups with students, have a conversation about what behavior is acceptable and not acceptable in your group. This is a good time to talk with students about appropriate online behaviors and what it means to be a good digital citizen.

If it's not already outlined in your school social media policy, we also recommend that you set up a clear escalation path for students to report abusive behavior to you, parent or another school administrator.

In our experience we have found Facebook to be very responsive to reports of abuse. You should also remind students that when they report abusive behavior or bullying to Facebook, it will be kept confidential.

You can report a group that violates Facebook's [Statement of Rights and Responsibilities](http://www.facebook.com/terms) (<http://www.facebook.com/terms>) by clicking the "Report Group" link at the bottom of the group's page.

Need help? Have more questions?

If you need help setting up your group, or have additional questions about managing Facebook Groups, you can find the answers you need in the [Facebook Help Center](#).

You can also [visit the official Facebook Groups](#) page to get updates and information on the latest features and product updates.



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