TWITTER: GETTING STARTED

Step-by-step guide to create your Twitter account

Go to **Twitter.com/signup.**

Enter your school's name. Enter an email address that you would like your account to be tied to, and a password that you don't mind sharing should others become involved in the school's social media in the future. Click **"Sign up."**

You will be prompted to enter a phone number.

You will be prompted to choose a username. If your school's name isn't available, try adding HISD into the name (e.g. HerreraHISD). Click **"Sign up."**

There are now six steps to complete. On **Step 1 of 6**, click **"Let's go!"**

Step 2 of 6 asks you to add a photo. An image that is **400 x 400** (Displays 200 x 200) is ideal. Make it something that is good quality and represents your school, like a logo.

Step 3 of 6 asks what topics interest you. This is to give you suggested accounts to follow. Choose whatever you like or none at all. Click **"Continue."**

Step 4 of 6 suggests Twitter import your email contacts. Since this is not a personal account, you can skip this step by clicking **"No thanks."**

Step 5 of 6 suggests Twitter accounts to follow. You can choose some, all or none of these. When you make your selection, click the blue button at the upper right of the page.

Step 6 of 6 is the completion of your profile. Click on your username in the top left corner, right next to your new profile picture. On the next screen, click **"edit profile"** to the top right. Here you can do several things:

- Fill out a bio that identifies you as an HISD school and touts what makes your school special.
- Add your school's location.
- Add your school's website address.
- Choose a theme color for your page. It can match your profile picture.
- Add a header photo or keep it a solid color: Make sure the photo you choose is of good quality and is horizontal enough that it doesn't cut off heads. A beauty shot of your school, a classroom full of smiling students, or a panoramic photo of teachers and staff would be good choices for this, and 1500x500 is a good size. Just check the photo crop once it's posted to ensure it's visually appealing.
- Click **"Save changes."**

Now, send your first Tweet! And don't forget to follow **@HoustonISD**. We'll follow you and add you to a list called "HISD Schools, Depts." so we'll see your tweets quickly – and we might **retweet you!** Take a look at the list so you can follow other district schools:

https://twitter.com/HoustonISD/lists/hisd-schools-depts/members

Download the Twitter app on your mobile phone. The app makes it easy to take and tweet photos and videos. **(If you have a personal Twitter account, too, always check to see that you are tweeting from the right account!)**

TWITTER TIPS

Tips for posting on Twitter

Twitter's character count is 280 – but keep your posts as brief as possible.

Post photos. Lots of photos. Post videos, too. And GIFS. Twitter limits users to 4 photos per post and limits videos (1 per post) to 2 minutes and 20 seconds.

Use shortened links. It only takes a minute to set up a free account on bitly.com, and you'll be able to see how many people clicked on those links. It's often helpful to add the link to your Tweet before you start typing the rest of the text so you're sure to have room for it.

Remember that everything you post is public. If you don't want every single person in the world to see it, don't post it. Even if you delete a post, there's a chance someone could have a screenshot of it. You can't edit a tweet, but you can delete it.

Post regularly. If possible, one tweet a day is a good place to start. **Retweets count!** Check to see if **@HoustonISD** has posted anything of interest to your followers. Share content that is school-related, educational, and relevant to your school community. Celebrate victories. Post academic and athletic wins. Celebrate and spotlight your students, faculty and staff.

Be authentic. People want to feel like they're communicating with a human being. Be funny. Be sensitive. Be serious when you need to. Always be conversational.

Engage with your followers. Answer any reasonable questions tweeted to your account or received as a direct message. If you do not know the answer to the question, find someone who does! If you find a tweet that contains a threat against anyone at your school, or the school in general, get screenshots of it and report it to the principal and HISD police immediately.

Do not engage in an argument with anyone. If things begin to get heated, take the conversation off social media.

Recognize and thank community and business partners. Tagging the business may result in more people seeing your tweet, and that could translate to more followers.

Tags and hashtags are different. Tagging is adding to your tweet a Twitter handle belonging to another person/company so they will see it. Do it wherever possible. If you put your tag as the first **"word"** in your tweet, add a period before the handle (ex: .@HoustonISD). Without that period, Twitter thinks the tweet is supposed to only be seen by the person with the handle.

A hashtag groups tweets together by keywords: #WeAreHISD. Clicking on the hashtagged word shows you all other tweets with that hashtag. Create your own hashtag (it's best to do a search for the hashtag to see if it is in use first) and use it frequently, or join the conversation using an existing hashtag.

Schedule posts. Sign up for TweetDeck or HootSuite to schedule your posts. You don't have to be on social media 24/7 to use it effectively.

Make sure your students' safety is a priority. Be sure all students in photos have signed media releases.

Ask for help if you need it. If you have general questions about social media, give the **HISD Communications Department** a call at **713-556-6066** and someone will assist you.