

Personnel**SUBJECT: STAFF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA****Purpose and Applicability of Policy**

Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning. The School District is committed to ensuring that all School District employees who utilize social media technology for professional purposes described below, do so in a safe and responsible manner.

This policy covers professional social media communication between employees, as well as social media communication between employees and students. In recognition of the public and pervasive nature of social media communications, as well as the fact that in this digital era, the lines between professional and personal endeavors are sometimes blurred, this policy also covers use of personal social media by employees. This policy does not address student social media activity, which is covered in a separate School District policy.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Google+, and Flickr.

Professional social media refers to work-related social media activity that is either school-based (e.g., a principal establishing a Facebook page for his/her school or a teacher establishing a blog for his/her class), or non-school-based (e.g., a School District office establishing a Facebook page to facilitate the office's administration).

Personal social media use is a non work-related social media activity (e.g., a School District employee establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for his/her own personal use).

Professional Social Media Use

School-based professional social media sites and School District employees' communications with students through such sites must be designed to address reasonable instructional, educational, or extra-curricular program matter.

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School District employees must treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or a professional workplace. The same standards expected in School District professional settings are expected on professional social media sites. If a particular type of behavior is inappropriate in the classroom or a professional workplace, then that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media site.

School District employees who decide to engage in professional social media activities must maintain separate professional and personal e-mail addresses. As such, employees must not use their personal e-mail address for professional social media activities – rather, employees must use a professional e-mail address that is completely separate from any personal social media they maintain.

When establishing professional social media sites, employees should consider the intended audience for the site and consider the level of privacy assigned to the site. It is recommended practice for professional social media sites to be private networks, unless there is a specific educational need for the site to be a public network.

Professional social media sites should include language identifying the sites as professional social media School District sites to differentiate from personal sites. For example, the professional sites can identify the school, department, or particular grade that is utilizing the site.

Professional social media communication must be in compliance with existing School District policies and applicable laws, including, but not limited to, prohibitions on the disclosure of confidential information and prohibitions on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory or threatening language. It is not recommended that employees post photos of other employees or students on professional social media sites.

School District supervisors (e.g., principal, superintendent) reserve the right to remove postings and/or disable a page of professional social media sites that do not adhere to the law or this or School District policy. Employees using professional social media have no expectation of privacy with regard to their use of such media. School District supervisors may regularly monitor professional social media sites to protect the school community.

Personal Social Media Use

Employee misuse of social media, whether on or off school grounds, when it creates a hostile, disruptive, or unsafe working environment, is prohibited.

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Employee access or use of personal social media on School District-owned networks or equipment, or on School District working time is prohibited.

In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, School District employees should not communicate with students who are currently enrolled in a District school on personal social media sites.

The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites, in violation of School District policy, is prohibited.

School District employees may not make representations that their personal social media sites speak in an official School District capacity.

Applicability of School District Policies and Other Laws

This Staff Use of Social Media policy is intended to supplement, not supersede, existing School District policies, and laws. All existing School District policies, regulations and laws that cover employee conduct are applicable in the social media environment.

NOTE: Refer also to policies #6122 -- Staff-Student Relations (Fraternization)
#6123 -- Offensive Workplace Behavior