

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY SCHOOL STAFF

The School Committee recognizes that social media sites have become important means of communication with potential pedagogical value. This policy sets forth expectations for school staff when using social media for school-related and personal purposes. Staff members are expected to preserve the integrity of the learning environment and shall maintain professional boundaries with students at all times.

"Social media" shall mean technology and/or Internet-based tool(s) for sharing and/or discussing information among users, and includes, but is not limited to, web pages, social networking, blogs, forums, social bookmarking, image sharing applications, and social news sites.

Approval Procedure

The use of social media for school-related purposes requires pre-approval in accordance with this policy.

A staff member who desires to use social media for school-related purposes shall submit a proposal and request for approval to his or her building principal/supervisor (~~GBEEA-E~~). Proposals for the school-related use of social media should include an articulated educational purpose and be appropriate to the students' ages, level(s) of understanding, and range(s) of knowledge. Use of social media with students is limited to grades seven and higher. Any student under 13 needs parent permission to access approved social media.

The building principal/supervisor or designee may approve, deny, or approve with modification the proposal. The decision of the building principal/supervisor will be in writing and shall be final. Any later modifications to a proposal that has been approved must also be pre-approved by the building principal/supervisor. The building principal/supervisor may withdraw his or her approval at any time for any reason.

Approved proposals for the school-related use of social media shall be resubmitted annually by September 30th for review.

Terms of Use

The school-related use of social media approved in accordance with this policy shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Content on approved social media shall at all times comply with district policies, procedures, and regulations, as well as with any applicable state and federal laws (including confidentiality laws).

2. The responsible staff member shall monitor student use of the approved social media and shall remove content that violates district policies, procedures or regulations, or state or federal laws. Any inappropriate use of approved social media shall be reported to building administration.
3. The School Department may monitor any approved social media for compliance with district's policies, procedures and regulations.

Personal Use of Social Media

The Committee understands that many staff members use social media for personal purposes on personal time. Staff members shall keep their professional social media presence separate from their personal social media. Staff shall not use School Department time, or their School Department-issued email address for personal use of social media.

Staff members are prohibited from “friending” students or engaging in any other interactions on social networking sites or through any digital applications (outside of any school-approved activity).

Staff members are expected to exhibit professional decorum on social media and shall not engage in conduct that violates Committee policies, procedures and rules; which adversely affects their capacity to serve as a role model for students; or which distracts from or disrupts the educational process or the operations of the schools.

Violations of this policy may result in the withdrawal of approval to utilize social media for school purposes and/or disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances of each case.

Cross Reference:

GCSA/GCSA-R – Employee Use of School-Issued Computers, Devices and the Internet

IJNDB/IJNDB-R – Student Use of School-Issued Computers, Devices and the Internet

Adopted: