
Social Media Policy 3-501

Purpose

The District seeks to ensure that its use of Social Media technology enhances the professional and academic mission and goals of the District.

Social Media technology, used appropriately, can provide significant educational and professional benefits to students, staff and District Community. It can be used to enhance education, communication, and learning.

Scope

The Governing Board recognizes that Social Media platforms are used by the District to communicate with students, families, staff, and the community. All use must comply with applicable laws and be aligned with the District's mission and goals.

This policy and related regulations apply to:

- Official District Social Media accounts,
- employee use of Social Media in an official capacity; and
- employee conduct on Social Media when it impacts District operations.

1. Definitions

Social Media means any digital platform enabling users to create, share, or interact with content (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, etc.).

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The policies are developed in collaboration with the Small School Districts' Association for general informational, educational and procedural purposes only and are not intended to constitute legal advice for any specific situation.

Official District Account means any account created, maintained, or authorized by the District for communication with the public, also referred to as District-Related Account.

Personal Account means an account not owned or controlled by the District.

2. Authorization to Use Official District Account

Employees must receive authorization from the Superintendent or designee before using any District-Related Account as follows:

- Employees shall make a written request. The request will specify each Social Media platform(s) and the job-related objectives for using each platform(s);
- After reviewing the request, the Superintendent or designee shall provide one of the following responses in writing (email permissible):
 - o Authorize the request as proposed;
 - o Reject the request in its entirety;
 - o Request additional information from the employee making the request; or
 - o Authorize more limited use than what was requested by the employee.
- If a request is approved by the Superintendent or designee, all account set-up must be reviewed and approved to ensure that appropriate privacy and security features are in place before the account is open to others to view; and
- The employee's use of District-related Social Media is limited to those areas specifically authorized by the Superintendent or designee, by the terms of this policy, by privacy laws, and other laws and policies governing employment with the District.

3. District Oversight

The District shall:

- Maintain control and oversight of all Official District Social Media accounts.
- Ensure that content posted on District accounts complies with all applicable laws, including laws governing:
 - o student privacy and confidentiality (including FERPA);

- o nondiscrimination;
- o copyright and intellectual property; and
- o public records retention.
- Prohibit the disclosure of confidential or student-identifiable information on Social Media platforms.
- Ensure that official communications through Social Media are consistent with Board policies, administrative regulations, and District messaging.
- Establish guidelines governing employee use of Social Media when acting in an official capacity.

4. Social Media Use & Content

A. Use of Official District Accounts

- Accounts shall be created and managed only with authorization from the Superintendent or designee.
- Content shall be accurate, professional, and consistent with District policies.
- The District may enable, limit, close, or disable comments on any official District social media platform at any time, for any lawful operational reason, including but not limited to staffing, safety, records-management, or compliance concerns. The availability of commenting on one post, page, or platform does not create any continuing right to comment on any other post, page, or platform.
- All moderation, including the removal or disabling of comments, shall be applied consistently and without viewpoint discrimination.

B. Public Interaction & Moderation

- The District may moderate comments on its Social Media platforms to remove content that is:
 - o unlawful;
 - o threatening,
 - o discriminatory,
 - o or inconsistent with District guidelines, provided that moderation is viewpoint-neutral and complies with applicable law.

C. Student Privacy & Confidentiality

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- The District shall not post student information or images without required consent where applicable.
 - Staff shall comply with all confidentiality and privacy laws when using Social Media.
- D. Employee Conduct
- Employees using Social Media in their official capacity shall adhere to District policies and professional standards.
 - Employees' personal use of Social Media shall not interfere with their duties or disrupt District operations.
- E. Records Retention
- Social Media content and communications may constitute public records and shall be retained in accordance with applicable law and District retention policies.

Administrative Regulations

All District-related Social Media sites should clearly indicate that they are related to the District. Sites should identify the District, school, department, or personnel, as applicable. Approved District-related Social Media may utilize a school or District logo or seal.

And, while Staff's personal use of Social Media is not directly related to the District, it may have an impact on District business and staff's work at the District. As such, Staff's personal use of Social Media may be addressed by the District in accordance with law.

1. Staff Expectations

- Employees using Social Media in their official capacity shall adhere to District policies and professional standards.
- Employees' personal use of Social Media shall not interfere with their duties or disrupt District operations.

A. Separate District-Related and Personal E-Mail Accounts

Employees shall maintain separate District-related and personal email accounts. Personal e-mail addresses should not be used on District-related sites. District email addresses should not be used on personal Social Media.

B. Student Communication

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Any District employee who communicates with students on District-related Social Media should ensure each of the following:

- Communication should be an extension of the classroom and designed to address reasonable instructional, educational or extra-curricular program matters;
- Communication should be respectful, professional and comparable to communication in the classroom or work environment;
- All employees shall use privacy settings to protect student and employee records in a manner that complies with the law;
- Employees shall never post personally identifiable student information, including student photographs, without written authorization from the students' parents; and

C. Employee Personal Social Media Use

Whether an employee chooses to participate in personal Social Media technology is not a matter of concern for the District.

However, employees are reminded that they are a District employee and are expected to observe the following guidelines:

1. Communication with Students

In order to maintain professional relationships, District employees should not communicate with District students using personal Social Media (e.g., “following”, “friending”, posting, commenting, etc.).

2. Communication with Parents/Guardians or Members of the Public

Employees should not use personal Social Media to communicate with parents/guardians of District students or members of the public on subjects related to their employment with the District. Any information related to a specific student should never be communicated on any Social Media but only through the District's email system, by phone, or any other method that protects the student's and/or family's privacy.

3. Respect Other Users and the Safety of Students

It is never acceptable for an employee to post rude or offensive comments about students, coworkers, or the District in general. Employees should

respect the privacy and feelings of those they are communicating with on Social Media and should strive, at all times, to be courteous and respectful.

4. Employee Rules of Conduct May Apply to Social Media Use

The District's Social Media policy does not replace or supplant the policies, laws, and agreements which govern the conduct of employees of the District. Policies, regulations and laws that cover District employees' conduct may also be applicable in the Social Media environment.