Title: BIS Responsible Use of Social Media   **Policy No: IL.4**

Purpose:

The New Shoreham School Committee recognizes the increasingly important role that technology plays in the educational process as well as in the personal lives of the students, faculty and staff. Online discourse through social media, including the use of networking sites, text messaging, blogs, discussion forums, wikis, podcasts or other forms of social media, empowers educators and students in the scope of their respective interactions. The New Shoreham School Committee recognizes the open exchange of ideas through the use of such media and supports this process as a means of enhancing the educational environment.

Within this context, it is important that all participants feel free to express their thoughts and ideas in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process, or create unnecessary distractions to, or adversely impact, the interpersonal relationships between the students, faculty and staff. Moreover, proper respect for the privacy of students, confidentiality of sensitive information and respect for copyrights and trademarks are all important issues to consider before participating in an online social environment.

This policy is intended to foster a thoughtful, responsible use of social media and related technological communication tools that will minimize the associated risks and encourage professionalism and accountability at all times. Further, the purpose of this Policy is to protect and maintain professionalism in the workplace for all school personnel and to avoid, wherever possible, the appearance of impropriety in school personnel-student relationships.

Social Media Policy:

1. No employee, faculty or staff of the Block Island School shall post, forward or otherwise disseminate any data, documents, photos, images, videos or other information using any technology medium, including social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Google Meet, Zoom, etc.), which might result in a disruption of classroom activity or the educational process.
2. Personnel conduct online shall be carried out consistently with the standards applied while on school premises and in furtherance of the Block Island School Mission Statement.
3. Fraternization, including but not limited to, stalking, sexual harassment, and other objectively inappropriate behavior enabled by a position of authority, via the internet, instant messaging, text messaging or otherwise between school personnel and students (whether by mobile telephone, computer or other communication medium) is prohibited.
4. Posting confidential or proprietary information about the Block Island School, its students, its faculty or staff is prohibited.
5. Prior to posting videos or photographs of students to any online forum, including Facebook, Zoom, GoogleMeet, Shutterfly, a blog or any other media, notify the Superintendent in advance of posting, and disclose the content of the post, the location

of the post and the identity of any Block Island School staff or students depicted in the media. Photos, videos and other digital content identifying Block Island School staff, students or their families may not be posted online without prior approval of the Superintendent.

6. Use of student time for social media should have an articulated and defined instructional purpose consistent with the Block Island School mission statement.

7. Block Island School computers and school personnel time are to be used strictly for educational purposes. Access to social networking websites for personal use during school hours shall be reserved for school personnel authorized breaks or unassigned periods only and shall not be accessed during regular work hours, including classroom instruction time.

8. Any violation of this policy by school personnel will be subject to disciplinary sanctions included in the applicable collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of the violation.

Best Practice Guidelines:

The following "best practices" guidelines are intended to assist school personnel with the use of social media in an effective manner and to protect personal and professional reputations. All existing New Shoreham School Committee Policies applicable to school personnel extend to school related activities in social media as well as on school premises. Block Island School personnel are encouraged to abide by these guidelines while accessing, creating or contributing to any form of social media.

1. **Be Transparent**
   - School personnel should always be honest about their identity and must ensure their profile and related content is accurate, though no addresses or phone numbers should be provided.
   - All personnel representing the Block Island School in social media should identify themselves as such.
   - School personnel posting about Block Island School on personal time should properly identify themselves as Block Island School faculty or staff.

2. **Copyright and Fair Use**
   - Respect copyright and fair use guidelines. Be aware of possible liability for posting commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene.
   - Hyperlinking to outside sources is recommended. Ensure the content to which you hyperlink is appropriate and consistent with these guidelines.
   - Avoid plagiarism. It is recommended that the creator of any items of reposted photos, videos, poems, music, text, artwork or other copyrightable material be identified to the extent reasonably possible. Be aware that photographs taken by professional photographers, including those of you and for which you have been paid, can not be scanned and used on the internet without the photographer's permission.

3. Use Good Judgement

- School personnel should be mindful that what they post will be viewed and archived permanently online. Archival systems save information even if a post is deleted.
- School personnel should always be constructive, courteous and respectful when composing or answering a post. Be cognizant that comments can be forwarded or copied. It is advisable to delay posting on a passionate or heated subject until emotion subsides.
- Ensure that your contribution to social networking sites has valuable insights. Avoid posting information about topics or events which do not have professional relevance.
- Online conduct should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration that are used during face-to-face interaction.
- Posts, blogs, wikis, discussion groups, and podcasts are an extension of the classroom. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Do not post, or pass along mass emails and urban legends (funny stories, videos, non-school photos and other "SPAM").

4. Maintain Confidentiality

- Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the Block Island School, its faculty, staff, or students. Use good ethical judgement and follow New Shoreham School Department policies.
- If discussing a situation involving individuals on a social media site, ensure the individuals can not be identified.
- If any questions arise as to the appropriateness or confidentiality of a topic, consult the building principal or Superintendent.

5. Monitor Comments

- Reasonable protections against general public access should be employed and access should be limited only to identified or invited persons.
- Offensive comments may be blocked.

First Reading: May 18, 2020
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