

EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Board recognizes that social media sites have become important means of communication with potential value to enhance teaching and learning.

This policy sets expectations for school employees when using social media for school-related and personal purposes. Employees are expected to preserve the integrity of the learning environment in their use of social media, and must maintain professional boundaries with students at all times.

“Social media” means technology and/or Internet-based tool(s) for communicating or sharing information, opinions, and ideas with others, including but not limited to websites, blogs, forums, social networking, social networking and image sharing applications, and news sites. Some popular examples include Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; Wikipedia; Google; Instagram; Pinterest; and Snapchat.

As Regional School Unit 50 - sponsored sites such as Google Classroom are educational by definition and are not visible to external users, they are not considered social media for the purpose of this policy.

I. APPROVAL

The use of social media for school-related purposes requires approval in advance.

A school employee who desires to use social media for school-related purposes must submit a proposal and request for approval to the building principal. 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 six and higher.

The building principal may take one of the following actions on a proposal for the use of social for school-related purposes : 1) approval; 2) approval with required modifications or 3) denial. The building principal may consult with the Superintendent or others as appropriate in evaluating the request. The decision of the administrator shall be in writing and the decision is final. Any later modifications to a proposal that has been already approved must also be approved by the building principal. The building principal may withdraw his/her approval at any time.

Approved proposals for the school-related use of social media shall be resubmitted by September 30 of each school year for review. If an employee discontinues a use of approved social media, they are expected to notify the building principal.

II TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE

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

- A. Content on approved social media shall at all times comply with RSU 50 policies, procedures and guidelines as well as with any applicable state and federal laws, including confidentiality laws.
- B. The responsible school employee shall monitor any student use of the approved social media and shall remove content that violates school unit policies, procedures or guidelines, and/or state or federal laws. Any inappropriate use of approved social media shall be reported to the building principal/supervisor.
- C. The school unit may monitor any approved social media for compliance with applicable policies, procedures, guidelines and/or laws.

III. EMPLOYEE PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Board understands that many school employees use social media for personal purposes on personal time. Employees shall keep their professional social media presence separate from their personal social media. Employees shall not use work time, school unit technology, or their work-issued email address for personal use of social media.

School employees are prohibited from "friending" students or engaging in any other interactions on social media (outside of any school-approved activity).

School employees are expected to exhibit professional decorum on social media and shall not engage in conduct that violates Board policies, procedures and guidelines; 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

School employees may not use the school unit's logo on any social media website without permission of the Superintendent/designee or represent their views as those of the Board or the school unit.

IV. VIOLATIONS

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

Cross Reference: GBEBB – Staff Conduct with Students
GBGB – Workplace Bullying
GCSA/GCSA-R – Employee Computer and Internet Use Rules
IJNDB/IJNDB-R – Student Computer and Internet Use
IJNDC – School System Website/Web Pages

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