

EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

This policy addresses the use of public social media networks and applications by district employees, including but not limited to, social networks, web blogs, personal websites, online forums, and all other forms of social media.

Professional social media is defined as a district authorized use of social media activity that can be either school based (e.g., a principal establishing a social networking page for his/her school, or a teacher establishing a social media site for his/her class), or non-school-based (e.g., a district office establishing a social networking page to communicate with the larger district community).

All communications through professional social media tools must remain professional and appropriate and protect identifiable information. Employees should maintain no expectation of privacy with respect to these types of communications as all such communication is considered a public record. Employees must obtain their supervisor's approval prior to engaging in a professional social media presence.

Professional social media communications must be in compliance with School Board policies and procedures, including prohibitions on the disclosure of personally identifiable information and prohibitions on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory, or threatening language. No personally identifiable information or copyrighted information may be posted by district employees on professional social media without securing appropriate permission.

Personal social media is defined as a non-work-related social media activity (e.g. a district employee establishing a social networking page for his/her personal use).

Employees who engage in personal social media activities must maintain separate professional and personal email addresses and may not use their professional email address for personal social media activities, such as entering login registrations, and user-account information.

Use of district logos or images on a personal social media website is prohibited; any promotion of professional events must be posted on a previously approved professional social media website.

The School Board takes no position regarding the decision of its employees to participate in various forms of social media for personal use. However, the School Board does prohibit the use of social media networks outside of those sponsored by the district to communicate education records or personally identifiable information. Furthermore, district employees must avoid posting or communicating any information that would violate federal or state laws and regulations or School Board policies.

In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, and remain compliant with regulatory requirements, district employees will not communicate protected information, with or about students, through professional social media. The nature, content, frequency, and tone of such communications must be consistent with the educational purposes of

the communication. The district provides password-protected technologies for collaboration between employees, students and parents to make certain all records are retained according to the Department of State, General Records Schedules (GS1-SL and GS7) and in accordance with Chapter 119 of the Florida Public Records Statute. Public social media networks outside of those sponsored by the district may not be used in the classroom or for school-sponsored activities without proper authorization from the Superintendent or designee as well as parental consent for participating students.

The School Board recognizes that other communications between staff and students may be necessary to conduct the business of the district (i.e. canceling athletic practice due to inclement weather). Approved communication via text, instant messaging or any other measure must meet the following criteria:

- Must be voluntary communication.
- Must not contain protected information.
- Must follow all School Board policies.
- Must be archived and made available if requested via a public records request.

Any staff member who voluntarily communicates via text or any other method outside of those sponsored by the district to communicate assumes personal responsibility for archiving said communications.

Employees who use social media networks must adhere to School Board policies and guidelines. All existing policies and behavior guidelines currently applicable to staff similarly apply to the online environment. Any employee, including an affiliated pseudonym, or other on-line presence controlled or directed by such employee, engaging in inappropriate conduct involving the use of social media may be subject to discipline up to and including termination, in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

This policy will be interpreted, applied, and enforced to facilitate the proper use of social media for educational purposes in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards of conduct.

Legal Authority:

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); 20 U. S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99, 20 U. S.C. § 1417(c) and 34 C.F.R. § 300.623; Section 119, Florida Statutes.

Laws Implemented: Fla. Stat. § 1001.41(1); § 1012.795; Fla. Admin. Code, Rule 6B-1006.

History:

(Adopted – September 25, 2020)

(Effective Date—September 25, 2020)

The School Board of Volusia County

Request for Adoption (October 27, 2020)

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.