

Book	BOARD POLICY MANUAL
Section	Section E: Support Services
Title	Staff Use of Social Media
Number	EDEC
Status	Active
Legal	U.S. Const. Art. I, Section 8 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; 20 USC 1232 g et seq. Childrens Internet Protection Act; (P.L. 106-554, HR 4577, 2000, 114 Stat 2763) ORC 1329.54 through 1329.67 ORC 3313.20 ORC 3319.321

Adopted

Social media and social networking has rapidly grown in popularity and is used by individuals of all ages throughout all areas of life. Social media is defined as forms of electronic communication (as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Educational networking sites are also widely used. These sites are used by educators for both professional development and as a teaching tool, and are usually restricted to selected users and not available to the general public.

TPS recognizes the value of interacting on social media and educational networking sites. Collaboration, resource sharing, and dialogue can each be facilitated by the judicious use of social media and educational networking tools. Such interactivity and communication can be critical components of the educational process.

Educators and other TPS staff members have a professional image to uphold and their conduct online impacts this image. Educators' and other staff members' online identities are very public and can cause serious repercussions if their online behavior is careless. What is posted, stored, or transmitted online is also permanent; deleting an item does not forever remove it from cyberspace. While the District respects its employees' First Amendment rights, those rights do not include permission to post inflammatory or inappropriate information that could compromise the District's mission, undermine staff relationships, violate privacy, or cause a substantial disruption to the school environment. This warning includes staff members' online conduct that occurs off school property including from the employee's private computer. Postings to social media should be done in a manner sensitive to the staff member's professional responsibilities.

General District and school rules for behavior and communication apply to use of social media. The Board does not sanction any use of the District Network (the District's computers, mobile computing and electronic devices, network, wifi services, internet connection, facsimile machines, telephone and voice mail) that is not authorized by or conducted strictly in compliance with the Board policy and the

law. Users who disregard Board policy may have their use privileges suspended or revoked, and disciplinary action taken against them. Users granted access to the Network assume personal responsibility and liability, both civil and criminal, for uses of the Network not authorized by Board policy.

Professional Social Networks for Staff Members

Staff members may wish to establish a professional social network which relates directly to the staff member's work for the District and relates solely to the staff member's professional position. This is distinguished from any personal social network the staff member may have. The staff member should expect that the individuals who follow, join, friend, or otherwise become part of the staff member's professional social network could be students, parents of students, other staff or educators or administrators, and any individuals in the community.

Examples of professional social networks for staff members are a social media page for an individual administrator relating to his or her school, for a teacher relating to his or her class, for a coach relating to his or her team, or for an advisor relating to his or her club or activity. Staff members may also choose to have a professional social or educational network relating more generally to the profession. Social media pages or websites for schools or school groups (as opposed to individual staff members) are addressed in more detail in Board Policy IIBH, School and School Group Social Media pages and Websites policy.

Professional social networks for staff member shall be used:

1. For matters relating to the staff member's professional position only;
2. To promote the district in a positive manner;
3. To share district news and information in a timely and relevant fashion;
4. To encourage two-way communication between the district and the public or a particular group.

A staff member may access a professional social network on the District's Network or the staff member's network and during school hours only if such access is for educational use in accordance with Board policy and is not disruptive to the educational process.

An appropriate administrator shall be notified of a staff member's professional social networks and such professional social networks must comply with Board policies and applicable law. Any staff member who does not comply with Board policies or applicable law may have network privileges restricted or suspended. Repeated or severe infractions of the policy may result in permanent termination of privileges. Staff members violating any of these terms and conditions may face additional disciplinary action deemed appropriate in keeping with the adopted disciplinary policies and guidelines of the District.

Personal Social Networks for Staff Members

Staff may wish to have individual social networks for personal purposes, separate from any professional social network. Because everything posted or created online is public and permanent, even postings on personal social networks and online must not compromise the staff member's professional image or cross over to and negatively impact the staff member's work with the District. If it does, the activity

must not violate Board policy or the law and if it does, the staff member is subject to discipline under Board policy and the law.

Staff member's personal social networks must be separate from the staff member's professional social network.

Staff members are strongly encouraged to make all settings on social media "private" so that only individuals selected and approved by the staff member have access to the staff member's social media site.

TPS strictly prohibits any staff member from accepting invitations by a student to follow, friend or otherwise join any TPS staff member's personal social networking sites except for those who are immediate family members. TPS staff member's are also prohibited from following, friending or otherwise joining a student's personal social networking site. When students gain access into a staff member's network of friends and acquaintances and are able to view personal photos and communications, the student-teacher dynamic is altered in ways that potentially harm TPS and/or the staff member involved. By allowing students to join the staff member's individual social network for personal purposes, staff members provide more information than should be shared with students in an educational setting. It is important for all staff members to maintain a professional relationship with students and to avoid relationships that could cause bias or inappropriate interactions in the classroom.

Students' parents should similarly not be permitted to join a staff member's personal social network. Keep professional and personal networks separate. Everything posted on the internet is public and permanent.

A staff member shall not access personal social networks during school hours or through the District Network at any time.

CROSS REFS.:

AC, Nondiscrimination

IB, Academic Freedom

IIA, Instructional Materials

JFC, Student Conduct (Zero Tolerance)

GBH, Staff Student Relations

JFCFA, Cyberbullying