

Book	Policy Manual
Section	7000 Property
Title	USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
Code	po7544
Status	Active
Adopted	December 9, 2020

#### 7544 - **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Technology is a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning.

The Board authorizes the use of social media to promote community involvement and facilitate effective communication with students, parents/guardians, staff (including District-approved volunteers), and the general public. Social media is defined in Bylaw 0100.

The District Administrator is charged with designating the District-approved social media platforms/sites.

It is critical that students be taught how to use social media platforms safely and responsibly. Social media (as defined in Bylaw 0100) are a powerful and pervasive technology that affords students and employees the opportunity to communicate for school and work purposes, and to collaborate in the delivery of a comprehensive education. Federal law mandates that the District provide for the education of students regarding appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and regarding cyberbullying awareness and response. See Board Policy 7540.03 – Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety.

The District recognizes that employees may use social media for personal, as well as professional reasons. The District neither encourages nor discourages employees' use of social media for personal purposes. The District regulates employees' use of social media for purposes related to their District assignment to the same extent as it regulates any other form of employee communication in that regard.

The District uses approved social media platforms/sites as interactive forms of communication and accepts public comments. The District-approved social media platforms/sites are considered limited public forums. As such, the District will monitor posted comments to verify they are on-topic, consistent with the posted rules for use of the forum, and in compliance with the platform/site's applicable terms of service. The Board's review of posted comments will be conducted in a viewpoint-neutral manner, and consistent with State and Federal law. Employees' personal posts on the public platforms/sites are limited/restricted to matters of general public interest that are not related to the employee's specific employment and wholly unrelated to the employee's job responsibilities (i.e., matters where it is clear the individual is posting not in an official capacity, but simply as a member of the public). Employees in administrative positions are ordinarily not permitted to post personal comments on matters of general public interest because to do so could be misconstrued as Board-sponsored speech.

Each District-approved social media account/site must contain a statement that specifies its purpose(s) and limits those who access the social media account/site to use of the account/site only for that/those purpose(s), and in accordance with any specified procedures, and applicable terms of service. Users are personally responsible for the content of their posts.

The District Administrator shall maintain the District's social media presence with respect to general announcements, notices, or other such communications that are disseminated to the public at large or specific audiences within the community. To the extent individual staff members or volunteers wish to post information or announcements to a District social media platform, the staff member or volunteer may request that the District Administrator approve and post such information. (This provision does not apply to social media communications that are related to instructional and school-sponsored activities.)

#### **Social Media for Instructional and School-Sponsored Activities**

Staff (including District-approved volunteers) may, with prior approval/authorization from the Associate Principal, District Administrator, use social media platforms/sites for communications about classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities, as well as to support classroom instruction. When a staff member uses a District-approved social media platform/site for an educational purpose, it will be considered an educational activity and will not be considered a limited public forum. Students' use of District-approved social media platforms/sites must be consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, Policy 5722/AG 5722 – School-

Sponsored Student Publications and Productions, Policy 7540.03/AG 7540.03 – Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety, the instructor's directions/procedures, and the platform/site's applicable terms of service. Students are prohibited from posting or releasing personally identifiable information about students, employees, and volunteers through District-approved social media without appropriate consent.

Staff members must provide parents of students involved in a school-sponsored activity the ability to opt-out of having their child use social media platforms/sites for communication purposes associated with that activity, and arrange for an alternative method of communicating with the participating student concerning the school-sponsored activity.

### **Expected Standards of Conduct on District-Approved Social Media**

Employees and District-approved volunteers who access District-approved social media platforms are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner. Students, parents, and members of the general public who access District-approved social media platforms are similarly expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and civil manner.

District-approved social media sites shall not contain content that is obscene; is vulgar and lewd such that it undermines the school's basic educational mission; is libelous or defamatory; constitutes hate speech; promotes illegal drug use; is aimed at inciting an individual to engage in unlawful acts or to cause a substantial disruption or material interference with District operations; or interferes with the rights of others. The District may exercise editorial control over the style and content of student speech on District-approved social media if reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns. Staff or students who post prohibited content shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The District is committed to protecting the privacy rights of students, parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, Board members, and other individuals on District-approved social media sites. District employees and volunteers are prohibited from posting or releasing confidential information about students, employees, volunteers, or District operations through social media, without appropriate consent (i.e., express written consent from the parent of a student, the affected employee or volunteer, or the District Administrator concerning District operations).

### **Retention of Public/Student Records**

District communications that occur through the use of District-approved social media platforms/sites – including staff members'/volunteers' use of social media with school-sponsored activities, and comments, replies, and messages received from the general public – may constitute public records or student records, and all such communications will be maintained (i.e., electronically archived) in accordance with the Board's adopted record retention schedule and all applicable State statutes. (See AG 8310A – Public Records)

If a staff member uses District-approved social media platforms/sites in the classroom for educational purposes (i.e., classroom instruction), the staff member must consult with the Principal concerning whether such use may result in the creation of public and/or education records that must be maintained (i.e., electronically archived) for a specific period of time.

Employees and District-approved volunteers are permitted to use District technology resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to access social media for personal use during work hours, provided it does not interfere with the employee's/volunteer's job performance.

They are reminded that the District may monitor their use of District technology resource.

Employees are permitted to use personal communication devices to access social media for personal use during work hours, provided it does not interfere with the employee's job performance.

Employees and District-approved volunteers are prohibited from posting or engaging in communication that violates State or Federal law, Board policies, or administrative guidelines. If an employee/volunteer's communication interferes with his/her ability to effectively perform his/her job, or violates State or Federal law, Board policies, or administrative guidelines, the District may impose disciplinary action and/or refer the matter to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary

© Neola 2019

Legal	Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, Pub. L. No. 110-385, Title II, Stat. 4096 (2008)
	Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Pub. L. No. 106-554 (2001)

Last Modified by Tammy R Shroyer on January 8, 2021

