

146 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Background

The Division recognizes that the use of social media may be a means to enhance learning. Limited access to social media may be permitted by a principal for specific learning purposes. This procedure applies to all Division students, staff, and School Council representatives.

Definition

Social media is defined as a website, application or app that enables users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Included in this definition are the use of blogs, personal websites, RSS feeds, postings on wikis and other interactive sites, such as, but not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, Google Chat, Messenger, and postings on video or picture-sharing sites and elsewhere on the Internet.

Procedures.

1. Students:
 - a. Students may not access social media on school networks or on school devices.
 - b. Limited access to social media may be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent.

2. Teachers and Staff:
 - a. Access and permission to use the Division's logo can be granted by emailing the Superintendent or designate.
 - b. School logos will not be used without first obtaining written permission from the Principal or supervisor.
 - c. Unless given written permission from a Principal and/or Superintendent or designate, a user is not authorized to use social media sites to represent a school, School Council executive, department, or the Division.
 - d. In cases where a user has sought permission to represent a school, School Council, department, or Division, the user must identify themselves by name and as an employee of the Division or School Council executive.

- e. Any use of electronic media by a user must be consistent with the duty of loyalty each user owes to the Division and must not transgress any law or civil duty of care owed to the Division or any other person. Breach of this requirement will be considered to be conduct that is subject to action by the Division and the Division will take such action as it considers is warranted.

2. Respect, Privacy, and Confidential Information

- a. Users will not disclose confidential student information, images, or confidential school, department, or personnel records without first obtaining written consent from the Principal, supervisor, and the guardian(s) for students under the age of eighteen (18) who are not independent students, as defined in the School Act, or without first obtaining written consent from the Principal, supervisor, and from a student eighteen (18) years of age or older who is an independent student as defined in the Education Act.
- b. Users will not use social media sites to be defamatory or harassing towards any person and will not espouse or support any position or opinion or statement that is contrary to Board policies and Division administrative procedures.
- c. Users will not engage digitally in behaviour or comments that would reflect negatively on a school or the Division's reputation or the reputation of any person employed with or holding elected office with the Division.
- d. Users may be disciplined if their social media comments and postings, whether personal or school/Division related, are not in compliance with this procedure or any other policies or procedures of the Division.
- e. Users participating in social media activities will respect copyright laws, not only in relation to the content produced on the social media sites, but also in relation to the software that enables them to operate.
- f. Users participating in social media activities acknowledge that all information posted to sites is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) if that information falls within the ambit of the information protected by and governed by FOIP.

3. Staff-Student Online Correspondence/Interactions

- a. Online correspondence between staff and students must be related to course work, or school-sanctioned clubs/activities. Social media conversations between a staff member and a parent are subject to the provisions of this Administrative Procedure. Please see Administrative Procedure 427 for additional guidelines surrounding appropriate adult and student interactions.
- b. Private electronic messages between a staff member and a student, for any reason, are prohibited.

- c. Principal(s) must approve school-based social media groups that will be supervised and monitored by a teacher from each participating school.
- d. Principals will ensure that all school-sanctioned social media groups have at least two (2) administrators with administrative privileges.
- e. Principals will inform staff members participating in school-created social media groups with students that the ethical standards for the teaching profession apply at all times, whether in a traditional school environment or an online environment.
- f. Staff use of social media, such as texting, phoning, emailing, videoing and/or taking photos, when used with students, will be used for professional purposes only. Staff will ensure that a professional relationship is maintained with students at all times.
- g. Staff will not issue “friend” or “follow” requests to students and will decline all requests from students on social media platforms.
- h. Staff will set appropriate restrictions to maximize privacy on their social media accounts, ensuring that students cannot view or post content.

4. Social Media Accounts

- a. Requests to create a social media account must be approved by the Principal.
- b. As a condition of social media accounts, the Principal or Assistant Principal must be one of the two administrators of the account, who holds the responsibility to manage the account, including removing or blocking defamatory or inappropriate remarks.

References

Section 31,33,52,53,68,196,204,222,225 Education Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Personal Information Protection Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canadian Criminal Code
Copyright Act
ATA Code of Professional Conduct
Government of Alberta Ministerial Order #014-2024

History

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