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## AP I10 Social Media Use by Employees

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Legislative References: *Copyright Act* Section 29; *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* Section 30

Policy Reference: None

Collective Agreement References: None

Date: June 20, 2024

The District expects the responsible use of social media technologies and other forms of electronic communication to support learning and for district business and communication purposes. Social media usage must be undertaken in a manner that is respectful, safe, responsible, and privacy compliant. Professionalism in both work-related and personal use of social media and/or other electronic communications is expected.

Employees have a duty of fidelity to their employer; therefore, an employee's off-duty online conduct is subject to the same standards of behaviour that ordinarily apply to their on-duty conduct.

This administrative practice has been developed to provide employees an understanding of the impact of social media and electronic communications and their appropriate uses to ensure professional communication standards and to mitigate the District's and employee's exposure to risk.

This administrative practice also clarifies employee responsibilities when posting material online and exchanging electronic communications with students, parents/guardians, and co-workers. It applies to social media use and other electronic communications by employees whether during the hours of work or at other times, on the district network or from outside the district network, and on district devices or personal devices.

### **Definitions**

Social media refers to all internet-based applications and technologies which provide for the creation, exchange or sharing of information, opinions, commentary, personal messages and other user generated content, including but not limited to the use of social networks, digital citizenship, digital footprint, blogging, tweeting, wikis, podcasts, video casts, video, audio, media, social bookmarking, postings through digital applications on mobile devices or otherwise (e.g. Facebook/Meta, Twitter/X, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, YouTube, TikTok).

Electronic communications refers to any written, audio, video, visual or digital communications occurring between employees or any one or more individuals through



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electronic means, including email, texting and other messaging services whether or not such communications are internet based.

## Processes

### 1.0 Expectation of Privacy

- 1.1 Employees should understand that there is no expectation of privacy in the use of social media or electronic communications, and that online and other electronically recorded communications may potentially be read, accessed or published by third parties or transferred to others without the knowledge or consent of the creator.
- 1.2 Employees should not look to the privacy settings on their personal social media page(s) or online accounts as creating anonymity or as a guarantee that postings will not be shared more broadly.

### 2.0 Responsibility of Employees

- 2.1 Employees who engage in professional social media activities must maintain separate professional (sd64.org email) and personal email addresses. As such, employees must not use their personal email address for professional social media activities. The professional social media presence will utilize a sd64.org email address and be completely separate from any personal social media presence maintained by the employee.
- 2.2 Employees are responsible for their electronic communications and for any content that they publish online, whether it is under the employee's own name, an alias or is anonymous, and must ensure it complies with applicable laws, Board policies, administrative practices, and professional standards of conduct, including those of the Ministry of Education and Child Care. This expectation of conduct includes a responsibility to ensure that contributions to any site, personal or professional, that is created by an employee are monitored, administered and moderated to ensure compliance with Board policies and administrative practices.
- 2.3 Inappropriate communications through the use of social media or other electronic devices are subject to the disciplinary consequences as other forms of work-related misconduct. Employees have the responsibility to report to their supervisor any breach of professional conduct and responsibility outlined in these procedures, or the misuse of social media,



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technologies or communications that negatively impact students, the workplace, or the reputation of the District and Board of Education.

**3.0** General Standards of Conduct and Use of Social Media

- 3.1 Anything posted online by employees or communicated electronically to non-district parties may be perceived to be representative of the District. Employees are expected to model an appropriate online presence and to exercise good judgment to ensure that postings and communications do not reflect negatively on the employee's professional reputation or that of the District. Employees must take reasonable steps to monitor and exercise appropriate controls over their online presence, including by requesting that friends and third parties not post photos, videos or other online content depicting or pertaining to the employee that is not appropriate to the employee's role in the District.
- 3.2 Social media and online spaces are extensions of the workplace. What is inappropriate in the workplace, including criticizing students, employees, parents/guardians, or the District, is also inappropriate online or when expressed in other electronic communications. Electronic communications and online posts involving students, co-workers, or parents/guardians should always be professional in nature. Electronic communications and online activities must not interfere with the performance of an employee's responsibilities.
- 3.3 Employees must ensure that any information they post online or distribute through other electronic communications does not breach the privacy or confidentiality of another person. The use or disclosure of personal information of co-workers, students, or parents/guardians in connection with social networking websites and services and through other electronic communications may be subject to the British Columbia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA), and other privacy laws, and may also be subject to other legal obligations of confidentiality. Consent should ordinarily be sought before posting any person's image or information online.
- 3.4 In their use of social media, employees must respect and model copyright and fair use guidelines. Employees must not plagiarize and must properly acknowledge the authorship of materials posted by them. When using a hyperlink to attribute authorship, employees must be sure that the content



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of the linked site is appropriate and adheres to district policies and procedures.

3.5 When posting online content, employees should not speak on behalf of the District or Board of Education or use district logos on private social media sites unless specifically authorized to do so.

4.0 Communication with Students and Parents/Guardians

4.1 The District recognizes that there are potential benefits to the use of social media and other electronic communications as educational tools. Employees must therefore always ensure that communication with parents/guardians and students are consistent with appropriate professional boundaries and practices.

4.2 In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, district employees should not 'friend' or 'follow' students on their personal social media sites, especially if there is a student/teacher relationship. Employees may initiate or accept invitations from students if networking is part of an existing school course or school club structure and at least one (1) other staff member has administrative access to the social media group. In such instances, employees should interact with students using their professional social media presence (associated with their sd64.org email). Employees should also refrain from interacting with students on social media sites for purposes not related to the delivery of the student's educational program.

4.3 Only district authorized social media tools are to be used for online communication with students and parents/guardians. When employees wish to create other sites and/or use other online forums for communicating with students or parents/guardians, they must obtain approval from the principal who will obtain district authorization.

4.4 Employees are responsible for ensuring that any use of social media or other electronic communications with students complies with Board policy and administrative practices. Any personal student information that is posted to social media or other electronic communications while the student is under an employee's supervision must be compliant with the written permissions granted by the student and or student's parents/guardians.

5.0 Monitoring Professional Social Media Sites



## Board of Education of School District No. 64 Administrative Practices

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- 5.1 All work-related social media sites are to be maintained by a school administrator/supervisor or a school/district employee delegated by the school administrator/supervisor. Responsibility is not to be delegated to a parent volunteer or student, as the established social media site will represent the District. Official district social media account login credentials must be shared with the school administrator/supervisor.
- 5.2 The District is not responsible for social media accounts established and maintained by school or district Parent Advisory Councils.
- 5.3 The District reserves the right to remove, disable and provide feedback regarding professional social media sites that do not adhere to the law or do not reasonably align with this procedure.
- 5.4 Employees are required to monitor contributions to any site they create, administer, or moderate for professional purposes. Posts that are not in keeping with the spirit of the page should be removed immediately.
- 5.5 Any media inquiries received via professional social media sites should be referred to the Director of Corporate Services.