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## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 417 SOCIAL MEDIA

The District recognizes the importance of providing employees with a clear understanding of the impact of using social media and its appropriate use. In an 'online world' the lines between public and private, professional and personal can become blurred. Even when employees are social networking on their own time, they may be identified as working for, and sometimes representing, the School District in their online communications.

The District recognizes the use of social media and networking as one means of communicating in the online world. However, it is also recognized that the inadvertent misuse of social media by employees has the potential to put the reputation of the School District and its employees at risk. The following procedure has been established to ensure best practices and mitigate both the School District and employees' exposure to risk.

### Definitions

- Social media – Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat.
- Professional Social Media Use – Professional social media use is defined as any work-related social media activity that is either support services based, or school based (e.g., a District principal establishing a Facebook page for his/her school or a District teacher establishing a blog for his/her class).
- Personal Social Media Use – Personal social media use is defined as any non-work-related social media activity (e.g., an employee establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for his/her own personal use).

### Professional Social Media Use

#### Maintenance of Separate Professional and Personal E-mail Accounts

Employees who decide to engage in professional social media activities must maintain separate professional (District email) and personal email addresses (Gmail etc). As such, employees must not use their personal email address for professional social media activities. The professional social media presence will utilize a District email address and must be completely separate from any personal social media presence maintained by the employee.

#### Communication with District Students

Employees who work with students and communicate with students through professional social media sites will follow these guidelines:

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- Professional social media sites that are school based will be designed to address instructional, educational or extra-curricular program matters.
- On school-based professional social media sites that involve students, employees will use the sites for professional purposes only. Employees are not to review any personal social media accounts created by their students.
- Professional social media sites that are non-school based will have a relationship to the mission and function of the District organization creating the site.
- Employees will inform their supervisor before setting up a professional social media presence and acknowledge they have read and understood all district policies and procedures including, but not limited to, those regarding privacy, use of technology and social media.
- Professional district social media sites are to include language identifying the sites as professional social media district sites. For example, the professional sites can identify the District, school, department, or particular grade that is utilizing the site and be linked to the school website.

## Guidance Regarding Professional Social Media Sites

- Employees will treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or a professional workplace. The same standards expected in District professional settings are expected on professional social media sites.
- Employees will exercise caution, sound judgment, and common sense when using professional social media sites.
- Employees will use privacy settings to control access to their professional social media sites to ensure that professional social media communications only reach the intended audience. However, employees are to be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. Employees are responsible for understanding the rules of the social media site being utilized prior to utilizing the site.
- Professional social media communication must be in compliance with existing District policies and procedures, and applicable laws, including, but not limited to, prohibitions on the disclosure of confidential information and prohibitions on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory or threatening language.
- No personally identifiable student information may be posted by employees on professional social media sites, including student photographs, without the consent of the students. If students are under the age of consent, their parents/guardians/caregivers must consent.

## Monitoring of Professional Social Media Sites

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- Employees using professional social media have no expectation of privacy with regards to their use of such media.
- District/department/site supervisors reserve the right to remove, disable, and provide feedback regarding professional social media sites that do not adhere to the law or do not align with District policies and procedures.
- To assist in monitoring, as a recommended practice to the extent possible, the default setting for comments on professional social media sites is to be turned off or moderated regularly. If the default setting for comments is turned on, the comments on the site must be monitored on a daily basis by the user.
- When establishing professional social media sites, staff will consider the intended audience for the site and consider the level of privacy assigned to the site, specifically, whether the site is to be a private network (for example, it is limited to a particular class or particular grade within a school) or a public network (for example, anyone within the school or a larger group within the District community can participate). It is a recommended practice for professional social media sites to be private networks unless there is a specific educational need for the site to be a public network.
- District/department/site supervisors will maintain documentation of all reported non-compliant communications as well as any violations that are otherwise brought to the supervisor's attention.
- The district/department/site supervisors shall maintain an up to date list of social media accounts created including administrative access, username and passwords.
- Employees shall receive district/department/site supervisor approval prior to setting up social media accounts and platforms.
- District/department/site supervisors shall follow the District guidelines on acceptable District approved online applications.

## Media Inquiries

Any media inquiries received via professional social media sites are to be referred to the [Chilliwack School District](#).

## **Personal Social Media Use**

### Communication with District Students

In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, employees are not to communicate with students who are currently enrolled in District schools on personal social media sites.

### Guidance Regarding Personal Social Media Sites

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- Employees are to exercise caution and common sense when using personal social media sites.
- As a recommended practice, employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees have a personal responsibility to understand the rules of the social media site being utilized.
- Employees will not “tag” photos of other employees without the prior permission of the individuals being tagged.
- The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites is prohibited.

## **Applicability of Board policies, District procedures and other laws**

- This procedure provides direction intended to supplement, not supersede, existing Board policies and procedures. Users of professional social media sites are responsible for complying with all applicable federal, provincial, and local legislation.
- This procedure is not designed to serve as a code of conduct for social media use. However, all existing Board policies and procedures, and legislation that cover employee conduct, may be applicable in the social media environment.

## **Additional Inquiries**

This document is meant to provide general guidance and not cover every potential social media situation. As social media is a rapidly changing technology, the District will regularly review and will amend this procedure as needed. Should any questions arise, please contact the [Chilliwack School District](#).