

Adopted: September 14, 2020

Rothsay Public School Policy 447
Orig. 2020

Revised: _____

Reviewed: _____

447 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees are aware of and comply with the school district's expectations for personal and professional use of publicly available social media networks.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT

Rothsay Public Schools recognizes the importance of online social media networks as a communication and e-learning tool. The school district acknowledges the value of teacher inquiry, investigation, and innovation using new technology tools to enhance the learning experience, and the district recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies. Toward that end, the school district provides password-protected social media tools and district-approved technologies for e-learning and requires use of district provided tools for collaboration by employees.

The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within the context of social media. When employees choose to join or engage with school district students, families or fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside those approved by the district, they are advised to maintain their professionalism as district employees. Employees are responsible for their behavior or activity on these networks. Employees must report inappropriate student behavior, illegal actions or violations of school district policies governed by mandated reporting to their supervisor.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. "Public social media networks" are defined to include: websites, Web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media generally available to the public or consumers and which do not fall within Rothsay Public Schools network (e.g., Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, blog sites, etc.).

B. "District approved password-protected social media tools" are those that fall within Rothsay Public Schools network or which the school district has approved for educational use. The district has greater authority and responsibility to protect minors from inappropriate content and can limit public access within this limited public forum.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

Employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to act as role models to students in this community. Participants of social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the schools and the district, Rothsay Public Schools requires employees to observe the following rules when referring to the school district, its schools, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers and communities on any social media networks. [Administrative Procedure 447.1: Social Media Guidelines for Employees](#) contains additional guidelines:

A. The school district takes no position on employees' decision to participate in the use of social media networks for personal use on personal time. However, use of these media for personal use during district time and/or on district equipment is prohibited. In addition, employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws, school district policies and procedures, and guidelines set forth in the employee handbook.

B. Public social media networks, outside of those sponsored by the school district, may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities without the prior authorization of the Superintendent or designee and parental consent for student participation on public accessible social networks. The school district will maintain a list of acceptable social media network tools for instructional use on the Extranet. Rothsay Public Schools may use these tools and other communication technologies in fulfilling its responsibility for effectively communicating with the public.

C. An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's postings, displays, or communications on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws, the website's terms of service and any applicable district policies.

Employees are expected to be respectful and professional in all communications by word, image or other means. Employees shall not use obscene or profane language on any social media network or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, or may be construed as bullying.

Employees shall not use their district-provided email address when registering to use or when communicating on public social media networks that have not been approved by the district or are not being used for instructional purposes.

Employees must clearly communicate that any views expressed online are the employee's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the district. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the district or post comments as a representative of the district, except as authorized by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

When authorized as a spokesperson for Rothsay Public Schools, employees must disclose their employment relationship with the district.

Employees may not disclose on any social media network information that is confidential or proprietary to the district, its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy laws.

Employees may not use or post the district logo on any social media network without permission from the Superintendent or designee.

1. Employees may not post images on any social media network of co-workers without the co-workers' consent.
2. Employees may not post images of students on any social media network without written parental consent, except for images of students taken in the public arena, such as at sporting events or fine arts public performances.
3. Employees may not post any nonpublic images of the district premises and property, including floor plans.

D. Rothsay Public Schools recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media (sites) representing students or groups within the district. When employees, including coaches/advisors, choose to join or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as an employee of the district. Social Media sites representative of the school district must be approved by district administration and the current login and password information must be made available to the Technology Department. Employees have responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-student relationships at all times and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online. Employees shall annually disclose to the district the existence of and their participation in such networks.

E. Employees who participate in social media networks may include information about their work with the district on their personal profile. This may include:

1. Work information including school and/or district name, job title, and job duties.
2. Status updates regarding an employee's own job promotion.
3. Personal participation in district-sponsored events, including volunteer activities.

F. An employee who is responsible for a social media network posting that fails to comply with the rules and guidelines set forth in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees will be held responsible for the disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information, information that violates the privacy rights or other rights of a third party, or the content of anything posted on any social media network.

G. Anything posted on an employee's personal website or Web log or other Internet content for which the employee is responsible will be subject to all district policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines. Due to the public nature of websites and weblogs, the district is free to view and monitor an employee's website or Web log at any time without consent or previous approval.

Legal References: Minnesota Administrative Rule 8700.7500 (Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers)
15 U.S.C. 6501 *et seq.* (Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act)
17 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.* (Copyrights)
47 U.S.C. 254 (Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000)
Minn. Stat. 121A.0695 (School Board Policy; Prohibiting Intimidation and Bullying)