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2 **RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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4 **ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

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6 **SOCIAL MEDIA**

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8 Richfield Public Schools recognizes the continually growing presence and potential  
9 social media has in our daily experiences and educational settings. The purpose of this  
10 document is to guide social media practices and outline specific expectations that are  
11 designed to increase the effectiveness of social media in our educational settings.

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13 **A. GENERAL STATEMENT**

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15 Information produced, shared, retrieved, or highlighted through the use of social  
16 media reaches a magnified audience and has a significant level of impact. As an  
17 ever-emerging medium, social media reaches its audiences and establishes its  
18 impacts in new ways on a continual basis.

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20 Richfield Public Schools expects that when staff and students use social media in  
21 the educational setting, they maintain the highest ethical and educational  
22 standards. These guidelines are designed to create an atmosphere of honesty,  
23 individual accountability, and safety. Failure to meet or follow these guidelines  
24 may result in professional intervention and/ or disciplinary action.

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26 **B. DEFINITIONS**

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28 1. **SOCIAL MEDIA** - Social media is defined as any electronic  
29 communication program, application, or network that allows  
30 communication between and among multiple individuals, allowing  
31 individuals to retrieve, share, exchange, and produce information, or  
32 allowing individuals to highlight information whether they created it or not.

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34 **C. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

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36 The following guidelines are established to meet the expectations in the general  
37 statement provisions set forth above. These general guidelines apply to staff and  
38 students engaging in the use of social media on school sites or at school-  
39 sponsored events and/or on district-provided technology and technology  
40 systems. They may also apply to social media that impacts the educational or  
41 work environment in a way that impedes any person's use or enjoyment of the  
42 environment or causes disruption or harm.

- 43  
44 1. Treat all information and ideas contained in social media as being fully  
45 accessible to the public.  
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- 1           2.     Treat all information and ideas contained in social media as being subject  
2                   to all of the District's policies, specifically including discipline, anti-bullying,  
3                   anti-harassment, and internet usage policies.
- 4
- 5           3.     Treat all information and ideas contained in social media as if it is or could  
6                   be permanent public information that represents the staff member or  
7                   student now and in the future.
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- 9           4.     Staff and students must self- identify and may not misrepresent  
10                   themselves using another person's or organization's identity.
- 11
- 12          5.     Staff and students must follow copyright regulations and give appropriate  
13                   credit to the source of the information.
- 14
- 15          6.     Post and/or link only appropriate and relevant information that does not  
16                   violate any District policy relating to the treatment of other individuals.
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- 18          7.     Respond to others with respect and avoid comments that may be hurtful.
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- 20          8.     Communicate without the use of profanity, obscenities, or threatening  
21                   language.
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- 23          9.     Only accept invitations to share information from people you know and  
24                   trust.
- 25
- 26          10.    Whenever possible, consider utilizing privacy settings to control access to  
27                   your information and ideas.
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- 29          11.    Keep passwords and other personal information secure and monitor and  
30                   track their disclosure.
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- 32          12.    Notify a staff member immediately when coming across inappropriate  
33                   material, or material that is disrespectful or discriminatory in content or  
34                   language, or is in violation of any District policy.
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36 **D.     GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEE PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

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38     The decision to make personal use of social media is left to the discretion of each  
39     employee. The District does not affirmatively monitor employee use of social  
40     media; However, it may take appropriate responsive action when it becomes  
41     aware of, or suspects, conduct or communication on social media that adversely  
42     affects the workplace or educational environment or violates applicable  
43     professional codes of ethics, law, or District policy. Employees will be held  
44     responsible for their disclosure, whether purposeful or not of confidential or  
45     private information; information that violates the rights or privacy of individuals or  
46     of a third party, or for the content of anything communicated by the employee on  
47     social media. For that reason, employees shall observe the following when using  
48     social media:

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2 1. Employees must consider their role as a school employee before posting  
3 or communicating content that is obscene, profane, vulgar, harassing,  
4 threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory, or content that discusses or  
5 encourages any illegal or inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs,  
6 sexual behavior and/or sexual harassment or content that violates District  
7 policy, professional ethics, or law.  
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- 9 2. Views expressed on personal social media are the employee's alone and  
10 do not necessarily reflect the view of the District. Employees cannot act as  
11 an official spokesperson for the District or post comments as a  
12 representative of the District, except as authorized by the superintendent  
13 or the superintendent's designee. If an employee chooses to personally  
14 post on social media any commentary related to the District, the employee  
15 assumes all risk associated with the posting. Employees may not state or  
16 suggest that their personal messages are endorsed by the District.  
17
- 18 3. Employees may not disclose information on social media that is private,  
19 confidential or proprietary to the District, its students, or employees or that  
20 is protected by data privacy laws.  
21
- 22 4. The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public  
23 create and use social media representing students or groups within the  
24 district. When employees, including coaches/ advisors, choose to join or  
25 engage with these social media tools, they do so as an employee of the  
26 District, and thus the guidelines outlined above apply.  
27
- 28 5. Employees have a responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-  
29 student relationships at all times. This includes exercising good judgment  
30 and professionalism in any interpersonal relationship with students, for the  
31 safety of the students online, and responding as required as mandated  
32 reporters when applicable. Employees are strongly discouraged from  
33 engaging in any social media interaction with students.  
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#### **E. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

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37 When using social media using District resources, including technology and/or  
38 wifi, or during the school day, or in a manner that impacts the work or educational  
39 environment and may be disruptive or cause harm, students and staff are subject  
40 to all disciplinary policies. Disciplinary consequences are assigned as related to  
41 the severity, frequency, and/ or extenuating circumstances of the event. Primary  
42 consideration is given to those consequences for students that are educational in  
43 nature and designed to bring about the desired change in behavior. The District  
44 reserves its right to consider the full range of disciplinary consequences outlined  
45 in District policy and/or Minnesota Statute should the circumstances warrant a  
46 more stringent disciplinary approach.  
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#### **F. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS**

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The District reserves the right to remove individual social media site access from users, as well as content posted in our educational setting and the district social media sites that contain ideas or information that:

1. Provides an unauthorized commercial endorsement.
2. Presents illicit, pornographic, discriminatory, unlawful, misleading, untrue, or malicious content. This includes content intended to or that may bully, demean, intimidate, or harass and content that uses ideas or information in an inappropriate manner.
3. Advocates illegal or illicit activity.
4. Is repeatedly posted information identical or very similar content in a counter-productive manner, including aggressive promotion (spam).
5. Uses ideas or information that are not attributable to a specific source or uses the ideas or information from a specific source without required approval or source cite.
6. Provides little to no academic value.

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