

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Goals

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper, appropriate use of social media by District employees, students, and members of the Board of Education. Social media has become a communications, entertainment, and learning tool.

This policy aims to prevent use of social media in a manner which disrupts the educational environment and/or jeopardizes the safety, health and well-being of employees and students.

The Board respects the legal rights of employees, including the protection for employee activities under the New York Public Employees' Fair Employment Act, (Taylor Law). The Board also recognizes an employee's right to free speech and the desire of employees to speak out on issues of public concern. These guidelines are meant to be consistent with law and employees' legal rights.

1.0 Policy

1. Definitions:
 - a. "Social media" includes but is not limited to all means of communicating or posting of information on the Internet or mobile telephone networks. It includes an employee's own or someone else's web log, blog, journal, personal website, social networking bulletin boards, chat rooms content sharing services and pod casts. Examples include Facebook Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, etc.
 - b. "Employee" includes all persons employed by the East Ramapo Central School District.
2. Employees are solely responsible for what they post. Employees are expected to consider the risks and rewards involved. Online conduct could potentially adversely affect their job performance, the performance of other employees, relationships with parents/students and the District.
3. Even when posting to social media as a private citizen an employee's reputation reflects on the District. Posts as private citizens may subject an employee to actions related to their position with the District.
4. The District may observe content and information made available by an employee on the Internet including content posted outside the workplace or workday.

2.0 Rules & Procedures

1. Employees must ensure social media posting is consistent with existing District policies, FERPA and other regulations that apply to specific departments and funded programs.

2. Inappropriate posting which may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate, or unlawful conduct are not acceptable. Defamatory, pornographic, harassing, libelous and other content that can create a hostile work or learning environment or which may disrupt the educational environment are similarly not acceptable.
3. The District expects employees to be truthful, courteous, and respectful towards co-workers supervisors, residents and others associated with the District, including through social media.
4. Employees must not post information, images, or icons obtained in their official capacity with the District.
5. Personal/private social media account names or email names shall not be tied to the District when posting.
6. Employees must not use District equipment or technology for personal social media posting.
7. District logos and badges must not be used in any social media sites that promote employee' private businesses or for personal gain.
8. Employees are not permitted to post, publish or release confidential information related to District business or student information.

3. Enforcement

1. The District expects and trusts our employees to exercise personal responsibility whenever they use social media, which includes adhering to all standards of conduct set by the District and ensuring that the legitimate business interests of the District are not compromised.
2. Employee who violate the guideline may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
3. Reports of violations of these guidelines should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Assistant Superintendent and/or the Superintendent for investigation and subsequent action.
4. The District prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible violation of this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting or cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Cross-ref: 4526- Computer Use in Instruction (Acceptable Use)
4526-R Computer Use in Instruction (Acceptable Use) Regulation
4526.1 Internet Safety
4526 E.4 Network Use Agreement

Ref: Public Law No. 106-554
47 USC§ 254
20 USC§ 6801

Adopted: 06-23-20