

4051

Staff and District Social Media Use

Social media is an important tool for communicating, keeping up to date with current developments in education, and for conducting research to enhance management, teaching, and learning skills. The district also uses social media accounts to provide information to district stakeholders. This policy is intended to ensure (1) appropriate use of social media by staff and (2) appropriate control of social media accounts belonging to or affiliated with the district (each, a “School-Affiliated Account”). Staff should also refer to the district’s policy on Staff Computer and Internet Usage. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

I. Personal Versus School-Affiliated Social Media Use

II. Personal Social Media Use

III. The school district will not require staff members or applicants for employment to provide the district with their username and password to personal social media accounts (each, a “Personal Account”).

IV. Staff members should not post photos of students to any Personal Account to prevent confusion about the purpose of that account/page.

V. Staff should refrain from ‘tagging’ or prominently listing Ralston Public Schools or their individual school on any Personal Account to prevent confusion about the purpose of that account/page.

VI. Staff should refrain from accepting student friends or followers on any Personal Account until after that student has graduated. Likewise, staff should refrain from accepting parent(s)/family members of students on any Personal Account unless a previously established personal relationship exists outside of professional, school-related interactions.

VII. Use of School-Affiliated Accounts

VIII. Any account which purports to be an “official” account of the school district (e.g., “Ralston Football”), or any of its programs, classes or entities will be considered to be a School-Affiliated Account that is used exclusively for the school district’s business purpose. Staff members may not use School-Affiliated Accounts for personal use.

IX. If a staff member’s Personal Account shares school-related information and updates for students and families, prominently lists their position with Ralston Public Schools, or otherwise indicates a connection between the view expressed on such account and Ralston Public Schools, such account will be considered a School-Affiliated Account and subject to the restrictions provided herein.

X. Staff should not use School-Affiliated Accounts to ‘like, ‘favorite,’ or share content that is inappropriate, political in nature, or otherwise fails to uphold RPS’ professional standards.

XI. Staff may be required to provide their supervising administrator with the username and password to School-Affiliated Accounts.

XII. Staff may be required to interact with specified individuals on School-Affiliated Accounts.

XIII. When staff use School-Affiliated Accounts to comment on school-related matters, they do not do so as private citizens and are therefore not entitled to First Amendment protections.

XIV. Staff must ensure that all School-Affiliated Account activity involving student-related information is in compliance with all applicable restrictions regarding such information, including, but not limited to, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (e.g. staff must confirm that students shown in photographs and/or videos displayed on School-Affiliated Accounts have a current and properly-completed Media Release on file with the District). Staff must also comply with all applicable state and federal record retention requirements.

XV. Staff Expectations in Use of Social Media – Applicable to Both Personal and School-Affiliated Accounts

XVI. General Use and Conditions

XVII. Staff must comply with all board policies, applicable laws, contract provisions, and applicable rules of professional conduct in their social media usage. They must comply with the board’s policy on professional boundaries between staff and students at all times and in both physical and digital environments.

XVIII. Staff must comply with all applicable laws prohibiting the use or disclosure of impermissible content, such as copyright laws, accountability and disclosure laws, and any other law governing the use of resources of a political subdivision. Questions about appropriate content should be referred to the staff member’s supervising administrator.

XIX. Staff members who wish to begin using or to continue using the school district name, programs, mascot, image or likeness as part of any Personal or School Affiliated Account must notify their supervising administrator of the use, and must secure the administrator’s permission to do so.

XX. Staff members whose social media use (whether on a Personal Account or otherwise) interferes with the orderly operation of the school, including, without limitation, disruption of the learning environment or disruption of relationships with and between students,

families, or colleagues; or who use such social media in ways that are not protected by the First Amendment may be subject to discipline by the district.

XXI. Acceptable Use

XXII. Staff may use social media for instructional purposes with prior approval of the staff member's supervising administrator.

XXIII. Staff may use School-Affiliated Accounts for school-related communication with fellow educators, students, parents, and patrons.

XXIV. Teachers should integrate the use of electronic resources, which may include social media, into the classroom. As the quality and integrity of content on social media, and other internet content, is not guaranteed, teachers must examine the source of the information and provide guidance to students on evaluating the quality of information they may encounter.

XXV. Unacceptable Use

XXVI. Staff shall not access obscene, political, or pornographic material while at school, on school-owned device or on School-Affiliated Accounts.

XXVII. Staff shall not engage in any illegal activities, including the downloading and reproduction of copyrighted materials.

XXVIII. School-Affiliated Digital Content

XXIX. General Use and Conditions for School-Affiliated Accounts

Staff must obtain the permission of their supervising administration prior to creating, publishing, or using any school-affiliated internet content including, but not limited to, School-Affiliated Accounts, web pages, microblogs, social media pages or handles, or any other digital content which represents itself to be school-related, or which could be reasonably understood to be school-related. This includes any content which identifies the school district by name in the account name or which uses the school's mascot name or image. Staff may be required to provide administrators with the username and password for all School-Affiliated Accounts and must only publish content appropriate for the school setting. Staff may not provide the username and password to School-Affiliated Accounts to any unauthorized individual, including students and volunteers.

XXX. Moderation of Third Party Content

The purpose of School-Affiliated Accounts is to disseminate information. Posts, comments, or any other content made on such account's pages may be removed

when the content meets any of the following conditions:

- XXXI.** Is obscene, lewd, or appeals to prurient interests;
- XXXII.** Contains information relating to a student matter or personnel matter which is protected under or prohibited by state or federal law;
- XXXIII.** Contains threatening, harassing, or discriminatory words or phrases;
- XXXIV.** Incites or is reasonably anticipated to incite violence, illegal activity, or a material and substantial disruption to school operations or activities; or
- XXXV.** Contains any other threat to the safety of students and staff.

Every account administrator must keep a copy of any removed content and must provide a copy to the superintendent along with written notification for the reason the post has been removed to the Director of External Relations. All questions about the appropriateness of removal must be directed to the Director of External Relations.

Adopted on:
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