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524.1R SOCIAL MEDIA USE

I. PURPOSE

Social media has become an increasingly important part of our ability to communicate with families, students, staff and the community. The District recognizes the need to embrace this valuable avenue of communication and engagement in order to serve our students. The District also recognizes the need to use these powerful tools responsibly in an ever-changing environment. The purpose of this policy is to guide both professional, educational and private use of social media for district schools, departments and staff.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. "Public online social media" are defined to include, but not be limited to:

1. Websites,
2. Web logs (blogs),
3. Wikis
4. Social Networks,
5. Online Forums,
6. Virtual worlds,
7. Any other interactive social media generally available to the public on the internet (e.g. Tumblr™, Facebook™, X (Formerly Twitter™), LinkedIn™, Flickr™, YouTube™, blog sites, etc.)

B. "District-approved, password protected online social media" are interactive media within the District's electronic technologies network or which the Superintendent, or Superintendent's designee, has approved for educational use, including, but not limited to:

1. RAS Google™ accounts;
2. District authorized interactive portions of MOODLE™
3. District authorized social media on Facebook™, X (Formerly Twitter™), Instagram™ or YouTube™ or other similar media

III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Only those public online social media accounts approved by the District may use the District name, or name of any of its schools or departments, its mascots or team names in its title or style, or otherwise present an image in words or visual images that purports to affiliate the social media account with the Rockford Area Schools, its schools, departments, activities or programs.

B. The Superintendent is authorized to establish public online social media accounts on behalf of the District, its departments, schools, official activities or programs for the purposes of informing the public generally and specifically regarding district messages.

C. The Superintendent, or Superintendent's designee, may authorize establishment and use of public online social media accounts by teachers for educational uses for their classes.



- D. Teachers, coaches and district-approved student activities must use District-approved password protected online social media for educational or activity purposes, as these sources are within the District's ability to filter content and access, and allow the district to exercise greater authority to protect students from inappropriate content and to limit public access within these forums.
- E. For any established and authorized public online social media account a district employee shall be designated as the site manager. Any security, log- in credentials, or passwords for such accounts must be shared with the site manager's supervisor and the Superintendent, or Superintendent's designee.
- F. A live link to approved social media sites created under this policy may be placed on school, department or district websites.
- G. Sites created under this policy must comply with the District's policies on use of the educational network and internet.
- H. Sites created hereunder, and the district employees or contractors who manage them, must comply with the public online social media's rules for civil discourse and adhere to any age restrictions established by the social media owner.

IV. PERSONAL USE OF PUBLIC ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA BY EMPLOYEES

- A. The decision to make personal use of public online social media is left to the discretion of each employee, or other district personnel.
- B. While the District does not affirmatively monitor employee or independent contractor use of public online social media, it may take appropriate responsive action when it becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects, conduct or communication on a public online media site that adversely affects the workplace or violates applicable professional codes of ethics or other laws.
- C. Employees will be held responsible for disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information, information or data that violates the privacy rights, or other rights, of a third party, or for the content of anything communicated by the employee on any public online social media. An employee who fails to comply with this policy and rules established by the Superintendent may be subject to disciplinary and other consequences, up to and including termination of employment.

V. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Superintendent is authorized to promulgate regulations for the implementation of this policy.
- B. The Superintendent is authorized to establish application processes for schools, departments, services and student activities to establish public online social media accounts.



- C. The Superintendent may establish required training for users of public online social media.
- D. All site managers are responsible for adhering to district policy and applicable law in the use and content of the sites under their management

Legal References: 15 USC § 6501 *et seq.* (Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act)
17 USC § 101 *et seq.* (Copyrights)
20 USC § 6751 *et seq.* (Enhancing Education through Technology Act of 2001)
47 USC § 254 (Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2009 [CIPA])
47 CFR § 54.520 (FCC Rules Implementing CIPA)
Minn. Stat. §125B.15 (Internet Access for Students)
Minn. Stat. §125.B.26 (Telecommunications/Internet Access Equity Act)

Cross References: RAS Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)
RAS Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition)
RAS Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
RAS Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety)
RAS Policy 526 (Hazing Prohibition)



Policy 524.1R Social Media Use Addendum Processes and Rules

I. PURPOSE

The District recognizes the value and increasing role of online social media both in employee's personal and work lives. The purpose of this regulation is to address the use of social media by employees for district, school or program interests; the use of social media for professional interests, and the use of social media for personal interests, especially where those personal interests may intersect with their employee status. Additionally this regulation promotes concepts that address the maintenance of professional ethics and boundaries when using social media outlets in their professional and personal lives.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF REGULATION

A. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to make decisions regarding:

1. Use of district related logos
2. Applications for official social network accounts
3. Communication of district messages.

B. Use of District Brands

The mere mention of the Rockford Area Schools, its schools, departments, programs, mascots, teams or personnel shall not be prohibited. When the use of such items may lead a reasonable reader to assume that the post, blog, entry, photograph, video or other communication is the official site or statement of the school, district, department, program or team, or the authorized spokesperson for the district, school department, program or team, such use is prohibited. Use of any district entity logo is prohibited without the permission of the Superintendent or designee.

C. Application Process for District-approved social media account.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish an application process for district-approved media accounts. The department may limit the number of applications approved in any time frame, but in so limiting the number shall do so observing the following standards. Each cohort of applications shall consider approval of applications to assure:

1. An equitable distribution of the active and approved accounts across the district;
2. An equitable distribution of the active and approved accounts between central office functions and school functions;
3. An equitable distribution of the active and approved accounts between school configurations.
4. The capacity of the applicant school, program or department to adequately meet account monitoring standards.

D. Non-exempt Employee Actions

1. Non-exempt employees are advised that all social media account actions or review occurring at the employee's volition outside of their regularly scheduled



hours shall not be considered work for the purposes of payment of wages, accrual of vacation or sick leave, change in the number of hours assigned, accrual or effect on seniority, qualification for benefit participation or any other employee or compensation rights.

2. Non-exempt employees assigned by their supervisor to take any actions regarding social media accounts for which the employee is an administrator shall be considered work for the purposes of payment of wages, overtime, accrual of vacation or sick leave (if allowed under the appropriate collective bargaining agreement or contract) but for no other employee or compensation rights.

E. Reporting Maltreatment

All district employees are required to appropriately report perceived or suspected maltreatment of district students or vulnerable adults on any social media site, following district policies for reporting maltreatment. This requirement extends to all employees whether or not they are an authorized administrator of a district approved social media site or not. This requirement extends to all social media sites viewed by the employee.

III. STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

A. Authorized account administrators of district approved accounts and other employee contributors to district approved social media sites shall:

1. Avoid inappropriate speech which does or may offend or embarrass students, other staff members, district officials or members of the public.
2. Avoid defamatory statements regarding district supervisors, employees, students, participants, clients, partners, affiliates and competitors.
3. Make no fraudulent, abusive, profane, harassing or obscene messages.
4. Make no derogatory or inflammatory remarks considering another person's or group's race, religion, national origin, physical attributes, gender or gender identity, or sexual orientation.
5. Act to remove third-party postings that are fraudulent, abusive, profane, harassing, discriminatory or obscene.

B. Images and videos of students, staff and attendees at any public event, such as a regularly scheduled athletic contest or fine arts performance which are open to the general public without invitation, may be posted to a social media site. Names of individuals should not be included in the post, unless the individual portrayed is a member of the team competing or the performing group.

C. Images and videos of staff members may not be posted without their consent.

D. Images of non-public representations of district facilities or premises, including floor plans, may not be posted on any social media site.

E. Curriculum under the claim of copyright of the district may not be posted on any public social media site without written permission of the Superintendent, or Superintendent's designee.



- F. Employees are expected to maintain professional standards in online contacts with students and their families. Invitations to a personal social media site generally should not be extended to students or their families. Messages of a romantic, flirtatious or sexual nature between employees and students are specifically prohibited.
- G. References to the district made by the employee in the employee's personal social media sites should include a disclaimer that the opinion or view expressed is personal and does not necessarily reflect the opinion or view of the district.
- H. If employees are authorized to post to social media sites on behalf of the district, its programs, activities, schools or departments, the employee must disclose their employment relationship with the district.
- I. Employees may not forge or otherwise manipulate identifiers in a post to a social media site in an attempt to impersonate or otherwise misrepresent the employee's identity or affiliation with any other person or entity.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Employees are solely responsible for any legal liability arising from or relating to the content on the employee's personal social media use. Employees will be required to indemnify the district for any actions taken against the district based upon an employee's personal social media use.
- B. All employees are responsible for reporting breaches of this policy and its regulations to their supervisor, or, if the breach concerns their supervisor, to the Superintendent or designee. Supervisors shall confer with the Human Resources department regarding appropriate disciplinary actions, if any.
- C. Failure to comply with district policies and regulations and rules may subject the employee to disciplinary and other consequences, up to and including termination of employment.

Legal References: 15 USC §6501 et seq.(Children's Online Privacy Protection Act)
17 USC §101 et seq. (Copyrights)
20 USC §6751 et seq. (Enhancing Education Through Technology Act of 2001)
47 USC §254 (Children's Internet Protection Act of 1990 [CIPA])
47 CFR §54.520 (FCC Rules Implementing CIPA)
Minn. Stat. § 181.938 (Nonwork Activities; Prohibited Employer Conduct)
Minn. Stat. §125B.15 (Internet Access for Students)
Minn. Stat. §125B.25 (Telecommunications/ Internet Access Equity Act)

Cross References: RAS Policy 405 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
RAS Policy 409 (Employee Publications, Instructional Materials, Inventions, and Creations)
RAS Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)



- RAS Policy 414 (Reporting Maltreatment of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse)
- RAS Policy 415 (Reporting Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)
- RAS Policy 512 (School-Sponsored Student Publications and Activities)
- RAS Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition)
- RAS Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
- RAS Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety)
- RAS Policy 526 (Hazing Prohibition)
- RAS Policy 905 (Advertising)