

Bartlett City Board of Education		5037
Descriptor Term: SOCIAL MEDIA	Descriptor Code: Personnel	Issue Date: 06/25/2020
	Rescinds:	Revised: 09/24/2020

1 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and provide direction for District
2 employees when participating in online social media activities. The Superintendent or
3 his/her designee shall establish procedures to ensure effective administration of this
4 policy.

5 **Definitions**

6 Social media: Includes any and all forms of online publication where individuals engage
7 in conversation or exchange of written information or images (such as blogs, micro-blogs,
8 wikis, podcasts, virtual worlds, user rating services, messaging sites, and social
9 networks). Social media tools include online sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube,
10 Wikipedia, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. These examples are included
11 by way of illustration and not limitation; new social media platforms are continually
12 emerging, and the named tools shall not constitute an exhaustive list of social media
13 governed by this Policy.

14 Professional Use: Refers to an employee's personalized presence on social media to
15 advance a program or function of the Bartlett City Board of Education as part of the
16 employee's job responsibilities.

17 Personal Use: Refers to an employee's personalized presence on social media, initiated
18 at will by the employee, to advance a personal objective.

19 Disruption to the school environment: Includes any interference with the school
20 environment or violation of Board policy. Interference includes, but is not limited to,
21 violations of Policy 5024: Ethics, affected job responsibilities, compromised or
22 disharmonious professional working relationships, student or parent complaints, student
23 reassignment, student withdrawal, or a threatened or actual negative impact on the
24 learning environment.

25 **Social Media Guidelines**

26 BCS employees shall refrain from using social media for school-related messaging unless
27 otherwise approved by a school or department administrator. The primary method of
28 school communications shall be District-provided communication tools, such as a school
29 email, the learning management system, voicemail account, webpage, Seesaw, Remind,
30 or related professional platforms.

31 Professionalism should be maintained in all interactions with students, staff, their families,
32 and the community whether engaging in-person or electronically via social media. Failure
33 to do so may place an employee in violation of Board policy and at risk of discipline.

1 By accessing, creating, or contributing to any professional or personal use of social
2 media, BCS employees agree to abide by the expectations incorporated in Policy 5037:
3 Social Media.

4 District employees remain personally responsible for content published by, attributable
5 to, or connected with their presence on social media. Online behavior should reflect the
6 same standards of honesty, respect, responsibility, and consideration required of BCS
7 employees engaged in in-person communications, and social media use should always
8 remain within the bounds of professional discretion. Online conduct resulting in a
9 disruption to the school environment, whether resulting from professional or personal use
10 of social media, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

11 **Professional Use of Social Media**

12 District employees are prohibited from using personal social media accounts for official
13 school purposes. If a BCS employee wishes to incorporate social media into the
14 curriculum or educational program, he or she must first inform and receive approval from
15 his/her school or department administrator and receive express parental informed
16 consent for third party social media platforms. Social media use in the classroom should
17 be incorporated only in cases where the educational benefit outweighs the potential risks
18 of participation. Upon approval by an administrator, District employees may establish a
19 classroom social media account or page using District contact information, including
20 school email account, address, and voicemail extension.

21 Professional use of social media shall be considered an extension of the classroom, and
22 all content associated with such use shall adhere to classroom and professional
23 expectations. Copyright and fair use guidelines should be maintained, and the school
24 and/or District name, logos, and images may not be used without receiving prior
25 permission pursuant to Board Policy 1028. District employees incorporating social media
26 into the classroom shall maintain the primary responsibility for monitoring such use, and
27 what is inappropriate in the classroom should be deemed inappropriate online. Social
28 media interactions with students should demonstrate the highest levels of professionalism
29 and should adhere to all District policies regarding student records, safety, privacy, codes
30 of conduct, and ethics.

31 Any student information communicated through social media platforms must comply with
32 all District policies on student privacy and student records. In addition to the privacy
33 requirements set forth in Board policy and in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy
34 Act (FERPA), a student's participation in third party social media sites as part of a District
35 activity shall require express parent informed consent. As part of such consent, parents
36 must be made aware, in writing, that the District is unable to control such third party sites,
37 that the activity is optional, and that, should the parent decline to consent, a suitable and
38 educationally-equivalent alternative activity or assignment will be made available.

39 The District recognizes that student or community groups may create social media
40 accounts representing students or groups associated with the District. If and when District
41 employees join or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as
42 representatives of the District and are encouraged to use a professional social media
43 account. In this capacity, whether on or off duty, all employees are responsible for

maintaining appropriate employee-student relationships and have further responsibility for reporting and/or addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks. This responsibility includes maintaining student confidentiality, acting to protect the safety of minors online, reporting abuse, bullying, or harassment, and adhering to the Teacher Code of Ethics. Failure to do so could put an employee in violation of existing District policies and at risk of disciplinary action.

Personal Use of Social Media

District employees remain personally responsible for content published by, attributable to, or connected with their social media accounts. Online behavior should always reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, responsibility, and consideration required of BCS employees, and even personal use of social media should remain within the bounds of professional discretion. A BCS employee may be identified as an employee or may otherwise associate themselves with the District through self-identification, display of their name and likeness, school contacts, “follows”, or “likes” and thus must ensure that any associated content is compatible with the mission of the District.

District employees are prohibited from using personal social media accounts for official school purposes. Online fraternization between BCS employees and BCS students is strictly prohibited. Employees may not use personal social media to solicit or accept “friend” requests or other social media connections from BCS enrolled students or former students who continue to be minors. This prohibition shall not apply to any “friend” connection between a BCS employee and members of his or her family.

District employees are encouraged to remember that intentional messaging and privacy protections help distinguish personal comments from those communicated on behalf of Bartlett City Schools. Consistent with Policy 5029, employees must make clear that the view expressed on his/her social media is not the official view of the Board or BCS. Employees shall never use personal social media in any way purporting to be or speaking for Bartlett City Schools.

Even when incorporating the most restrictive privacy settings, employees should assume that all postings are in the public domain. Employees should understand that comments made using certain social media platforms are not protected by privacy settings, and employees must refrain from publishing content that could be deemed unprofessional. Online conduct resulting in a disruption to the school environment, whether resulting from professional or personal use of social media, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Reporting Notification, and Training

Improper uses of social media shall be referred to the building administrator and/or BCS Department of Human Resources for investigation. This Policy shall be disseminated annually to District staff, students, and volunteers via the Acceptable Use of Technology form and the BCS website. All District employees and volunteers shall be educated on this Policy, acceptable use of social media platforms, and related administrative procedures.