

**Superintendent's Regulation 8370-R
(FORMERLY 1970-R)**

THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

DLZ

Approved Upon Superintendent's Initials

6-28-19

Date

This Regulation provides guidelines for Rochester City School District Employees use of Social Media

1. Purpose of Social Media Guidelines:

Rochester City School District (RCSD) realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this end, RCSD has adapted the following guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students and the RCSD community when participating in online social media activities. Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own decision. Free speech protects individuals who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that school districts can discipline employees if their speech, including personal online postings, disrupts school operations.

These guidelines have been created as a resource for you. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability. Keep in mind that information produced by RCSD employees is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to RCSD's Acceptable Use Policy. Personal postings, even if marked private, may also be subject to relevant RCSD policies and procedures, as well as to relevant local, state and federal laws. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, podcasts or other social media for classroom or District use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before participating in any social media application.

2. What is Social Media and Messaging?

User-created content online designed in a collaborative environment, and messaging and chat applications, where users communicate, share data, information, and opinions with each other.

Tools include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking apps and sites
- Photo and video sharing apps and sites
- Social messaging apps and sites
- Social bookmarking apps and sites
- Podcasting and Vodcasting apps and sites
- Gaming apps and sites
- Blogs

- Wikis (Wikispaces, etc.)
- Other social, messaging, and communicating apps and sites

3. Comply with Related Policies and Agreements

As an RCSD employee, you have agreed to RCSD's Acceptable Use Regulation. Your conduct and actions must be consistent with that regulation. All materials, created, sent, received, accessed, transmitted or stored over RCSD's systems are owned, and may be retrieved, by RCSD.

This should go without saying but is worth reiterating: Social Media should never be used in a way that violates any RCSD policies, contracts or employee obligations. The best advice is to approach online worlds in the same way we do the physical one – by using sound judgment and common sense, by adhering to RCSD's Core Values, and by following all applicable RCSD policies.

For example, employees are prohibited from using Social Media and Messaging apps and sites to:

- Violate RCSD's Acceptable Use Policy, Privacy Policy or Security Policy.
- Violate RCSD's confidentiality and proprietary rights policies. Here are some examples of confidential and proprietary information: trade secrets, embargoed information, personal and financial information of donors, vendors and suppliers and customers, health information, student educational records, and information required to be kept confidential by law or contract.
- Infringe on RCSD or third party trademarks, brands and copyrighted materials or use a Social Media site or its content in violation of its terms of use.
- Circumvent RCSD's Code of Conduct, Ethics and Conflict of Interest policies.
- Engage in unlawful harassment of employees, students, volunteers, suppliers or vendors, donors, or customers.
- Defame the RCSD or its affiliates, employees, students, volunteers, suppliers or vendors, donors, customers.
- Circumvent policies prohibiting unlawful discrimination against current employees or applicants for employment.
- Violate any other laws or ethical standards.

4. When you Engage in Social Media and Messaging on Behalf of RCSD:

- Use these guidelines. Remember – only officially-designated employees are authorized to speak on behalf of RCSD. Any employee designated should be identified to Communications and receive periodic training as appropriate.
- The account you use is considered RCSD property, it is not yours to keep if you leave the District – meaning you will not try to change the password or the account name or create a similar sounding account or have any ownership of the contacts and connections you have gained through the account. This includes any accounts created to represent RCSD schools and programs.

- School and program accounts must have a member of the Communications staff added as an admin or must provide the Communications Department with access to the login for the account. School and program accounts should also be set up with the school's Google @rcsd121.org Gmail account and not your employee Microsoft email account. Example: sch19@rcsd121.org
- Once schools and programs have created official social media accounts and have provided the Communications Department with access to these sites/accounts, these sites will become official District sites. Steps will be taken to remove un-official sites that have been created without adherence to the process in this regulation.
- Check with your supervisor to make sure the time you spend on social networking during working time is approved and consistent with your job function.

5. Personal Responsibility

- a. RCSD encourages its employees with a personal online presence to be mindful of the information they share. Your online behavior should reflect the same professional and personal standards of honesty, respect and consideration that you use face-to-face and in work-related settings.
- b. Please note that even if you delete personal information, it still may be stored on the app's or site's server for a longer period of time. Information that is marked "private" rarely is private on the Internet. It is very easy for "friends" to copy and paste information about you and send it or forward it to others, for example. There is no realistic expectation of privacy on the Internet.
- c. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as a RCSD employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Use these connections wisely and well. You should also ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at RCSD and your role as a public school/State employee.
- d. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the appropriate security settings for any social media or messaging apps or sites (personal or professional) that you may use. Be sure that the settings are such that any personal content may only be viewed by your intended audience. Be aware that, even if your privacy settings are set properly, it is still possible for anyone who you've allowed to see your profile to copy and paste text and send it to someone else. It is also easy for others to "tag" or identify you in photos that they publish with or without your knowledge and permission. Similarly, if you enable settings such as Facebook's ability to allow "friends of friends" to view your content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.
- e. It is inappropriate to use e-mail, messaging, or social networking sites to discuss with a student a matter that does not pertain to school-related activities. Appropriate

discussions would include the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club or other school-sponsored activity. Electronic communications with students are to be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients, not to just one student, except where the communication is clearly school-related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, e-mailing a message about a student's grades).

- f. Connections or contact on social media and messaging sites and apps is prohibited with students, and strongly discouraged with parents or guardians of students. The District recognizes that because of the tight-knit community of RCSD, many staff members may have students or parents of students that are family members or close personal friends. However, RCSD cautions employees against engaging in such social media or messaging connections with these individuals concerning official business. Use your official, school- or work-related page(s) instead.

A recommendation for staff to respond to "friend" or connection requests on their personal apps or pages is:

If you are a student or parent requesting to be my "friend," please do not be surprised or offended if I ignore your request. As an employee of Rochester City School District, District procedures and practices discourage me from "friending" students or parents on my personal pages. I would encourage you to like and follow our school's (and/or classroom's, department's, the Rochester City School District's) Facebook pages, etc.

- g. Material that employees post on social media or messaging that is publicly available to those in the RCSD community must reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents/guardians or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children.

6. Professional Responsibility

- a. While social media and messaging can be a powerful communication tool and an educational tool for students and parents, RCSD employees are personally responsible for the content they put online. Be mindful that what you post will be public for a long time. Protect your privacy.
- b. Remember that social media in the classroom is an extension of your physical classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- c. Teachers who use social media to interact with students and/or parents in an educational manner or as a communication tool must find ways to interact without

giving students and parents access to their personal information and posts. Many social media and messaging apps and sites allow you to create “groups” or “pages” where you can interact with students without giving them access to your personal account. (Please see detailed Facebook guidelines for more information.)

- d. When posting on social media or messaging, RCSD employees are prohibited from posting or messaging confidential student information. Do not post or message pictures or videos of any students on any social media or messaging apps or sites.
- e. Use RCSD provided e-mail as your e-mail contact for official or school-related pages. Do not use your RCSD provided e-mail as a username or e-mail contact for personal pages.
- f. Please remember that all RCSD policies and procedures, as well as relevant local, state and federal laws (copyright, fair use, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, personnel statutes, criminal statutes, etc.) apply to social media communications.