

RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

SOCIAL MEDIA

Richfield Public Schools recognizes the continually growing presence and potential social media has in our daily experiences and educational settings. The purpose of this document is to guide social media practices and outline specific expectations that are designed to increase the effectiveness of social media in our educational settings.

A. GENERAL STATEMENT

Information produced, shared, retrieved, or highlighted through the use of social media reaches a magnified audience and has a significant level of impact. As an ever-emerging medium, social media reaches its audiences and establishes its impacts in new ways on a continual basis.

Richfield Public Schools expects that when staff and students use social media in the educational setting, they maintain the highest ethical and educational standards. These guidelines are designed to create an atmosphere of honesty, individual accountability, and safety. Failure to meet or follow these guidelines may result in professional intervention and/ or disciplinary action.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. *Social media*: Social media is defined as any electronic communication program, application, or network that allows communication between and among multiple individuals, allowing individuals to retrieve, share, exchange, and produce information, or allowing individuals to highlight information, whether they created it or not.

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are established to meet the expectations in the general statement provisions set forth above. These general guidelines apply to staff and students engaging in the use of social media on school sites or at school-sponsored events and/or on District-provided technology and technology systems. They may also apply to social media that impacts the educational or work environment in a way that impedes any person's use or enjoyment of the environment or causes disruption or harm.

1. Treat all information and ideas contained in social media as being fully accessible to the public.

2. Treat all information and ideas contained in social media as being subject to all of the District's policies, specifically including discipline, anti-bullying, anti-harassment, and internet usage policies.
3. Treat all information and ideas contained in social media as if it is or could be permanent public information that represents the staff member or student now and in the future.
4. Staff and students must self-identify and may not misrepresent themselves using another person's or organization's identity.
5. Staff and students must follow copyright regulations and give appropriate credit to the source of the information.
6. Post and/or link only appropriate and relevant information that does not violate any District policy relating to the treatment of other individuals.
7. Respond to others with respect and avoid comments that may be hurtful.
8. Communicate without the use of profanity, obscenities, or threatening language.
9. Only accept invitations to share information from people you know and trust.
10. Whenever possible, consider utilizing privacy settings to control access to your information and ideas.
11. Keep passwords and other personal information secure and monitor and track their disclosure.
12. Notify a staff member immediately when coming across inappropriate material, or material that is disrespectful or discriminatory in content or language, or is in violation of any District policy.

D. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEE PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The decision to make personal use of social media is left to the discretion of each employee. The District does not affirmatively monitor employee use of social media; however, it may take appropriate responsive action when it becomes aware of, or suspects, conduct or communication on social media that adversely affects the workplace or educational environment or violates applicable professional codes of ethics, law, or District policy. Employees will be held responsible for their disclosure, whether purposeful or not, of confidential or private information; information that violates the rights or privacy of individuals or of a third party, or for the content of anything communicated by the employee on social media. For that reason, employees shall observe the following when using social media:

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2 1. Employees must consider their role as a school employee before posting
3 or communicating content that is obscene, profane, vulgar, harassing,
4 threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory, or content that discusses or
5 encourages any illegal or inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs,
6 sexual behavior and/or sexual harassment or content that violates District
7 policy, professional ethics, or law.
8
- 9 2. Views expressed on personal social media are the employee's alone and
10 do not necessarily reflect the view of the District. Employees cannot act as
11 an official spokesperson for the District or post comments as a
12 representative of the District, except as authorized by the superintendent
13 or the superintendent's designee. If an employee chooses to personally
14 post on social media any commentary related to the District, the employee
15 assumes all risk associated with the posting. Employees may not state or
16 suggest that their personal messages are endorsed by the District.
17
- 18 3. Employees may not disclose information on social media that is private,
19 confidential or proprietary to the District, its students, or employees or that
20 is protected by data privacy laws.
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- 22 4. The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public
23 create and use social media representing students or groups within the
24 District. When employees, including coaches/advisors, choose to join or
25 engage with these social media tools, they do so as employees of the
26 District, and thus the guidelines outlined above apply.
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- 28 5. Employees have a responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-
29 student relationships at all times. This includes exercising good judgment
30 and professionalism in any interpersonal relationship with students, for the
31 safety of the students online, and responding as required as mandated
32 reporters when applicable. Employees are strongly discouraged from
33 engaging in any social media interaction with students, unless it is through
34 a social media account set up solely to share educational or school-
35 related information. If an employee does engage in a social media
36 interaction with a student, the employee must maintain professional
37 boundaries with students on social media. Employees may not engage in
38 communications with students that give the impression of being peer-to-
39 peer communications, unless the employee and student are related.
40 Employees must not have extensive social involvement or develop
41 personal or private relationships with individual students through social
42 media, unless they are related.
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44 **E. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

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46 When using social media using District resources, including technology and/or
47 wifi, or during the school day, or in a manner that impacts the work or educational
48 environment and may be disruptive or cause harm, students and staff are subject

to all disciplinary policies. Disciplinary consequences are assigned as related to the severity, frequency, and/ or extenuating circumstances of the event. Primary consideration is given to those consequences for students that are educational in nature and designed to bring about the desired change in behavior. The District reserves its right to consider the full range of disciplinary consequences outlined in District policy and/or Minnesota Statute should the circumstances warrant a more stringent disciplinary approach.

F. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The District reserves the right to remove individual social media site access from users, as well as content posted in our educational setting and the District social media sites that contain ideas or information that:

1. Provides an unauthorized commercial endorsement.
2. Presents illicit, pornographic, discriminatory, unlawful, misleading, untrue, or malicious content. This includes content intended to or that may bully, demean, intimidate, or harass and content that uses ideas or information in an inappropriate manner.
3. Advocates illegal or illicit activity.
4. Is repeatedly posted information identical or very similar content in a counter-productive manner, including aggressive promotion (spam).
5. Uses ideas or information that are not attributable to a specific source or uses the ideas or information from a specific source without required approval or source citation.
6. Provides little to no academic value.

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