

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EMPLOYEES

PPSD POLICY

General Belief	The Providence School Board is committed to creating a safe and dynamic learning environment for all students within the Providence Public School District (“PPSD” or “the District”), and encourages District employees to support that goal through educational programs and activities, and through consistent and positive interaction with the public, District partners, and with external entities. The Board believes that social media forums can and should be used to enhance learning, expand knowledge, improve communication, and connect with people and resources to help further the PPSD’s mission to prepare all students to succeed in their educational and career endeavors. The Board recognizes that social media is a powerful medium through which to communicate and exchange ideas, and engage in civic life. Additionally, the Board supports the use of social media to share news and information to help advance public education, to model effective digital citizenship, and to promote and support the work of PPSD schools, departments, programs, and partnerships that are empowering our students and helping them succeed.
Purpose and Scope	The purpose of this policy is to ensure the PPSD community utilizes social media in a safe and responsible manner, in accordance with applicable District policies, and city, state, and federal laws, including, but not limited to, the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and intellectual property laws. Further, understanding the ubiquitous nature of social media, and its convergent uses, this policy provides guidelines for professional use and personal use of social networking sites and applications. This policy applies to all District employees, as well as to District partners who work with or have contact with students.
Definitions	The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy and the legal obligations of the District. Digital Citizenship: Engaging in community and civic life through the appropriate, responsible, safe, and legal use of technology. District Employee or Employee: All District appointed personnel, pursuant to Providence Public School Board appointments. District Partner: District contractors, consultants, vendors, representatives from outside organizations, and volunteers who work in schools and/or have contact with students.

	Social Media: Any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including social networks, blogs, microblogs, websites, forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Google+, and Instagram. District Social Media: Accounts established by PPSD employees, approved by the appropriate supervisors, utilizing PPSD email addresses and/or technology resources, to serve educational and/or professional purposes. Parent/Guardian: Any individual who has legal custody over a minor student within the District. Personal Social Media: Accounts established by PPSD employees utilizing personal email addresses, and personal technology resources, for the purpose of participating in non-work related social media activity, even if employees identify themselves as District employees, and/or post District-related material on such social media accounts. CIPA (Children Information Protection Act): A federal law that requires schools and libraries that receive specific federal funds to certify that they have an internet safety policy that blocks access to obscene or harmful content, as well as other measures to protect children online. COPPA (Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act): A federal law that imposes certain requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.
Guidelines and Implementation Strategies	The Superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement the Social Media for Employees policy. The regulations should address each of the following: 1. <u>District Social Media Accounts</u> Individual schools and departments of PPSD may establish websites and/or social media accounts to serve educational and/or professional purposes. Such District social media activity should reflect the safe, supportive, and inclusive academic and professional environments of PPSD schools and departments. All PPSD policies, and all local, state, and federal laws pertaining to District students and employees on school property, and at school-sponsored functions and activities, also shall apply to students’ and employees’ use of electronic and social media. Use of District accounts must comply with the following: a) Websites or social media activities must have a pedagogical or professional purpose, or be related to District extra-curricular programs, and/or mission. b) Employees must obtain supervisors’ approval prior to establishing a District social media account.

	c) Supervisors or their designees are responsible for providing to the Office of Communications and the Office of Information Technology a regularly updated list of all professional social media accounts associated with their respective school or department. d) In accordance with PPSD’s Internet Acceptable Use Policy, employees should have no expectation of privacy regarding their use of PPSD property, network, and/or Internet access to files, including District social media. e) Supervisors or their designees are responsible for regularly monitoring District social media sites, and must have full administrative access to the sites. f) Employees establishing and utilizing District social media should be aware of and comply with the terms of service and privacy policy of the respective social media site. g) All federal, state, and local laws, including, but not limited to, the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) must be followed. h) All District social media accounts must comply with licensing, copyright, trademark, and fair use agreements and laws. i) The professional conduct expected of employees in the workplace shall extend to employees’ conduct via District electronic and social media. 2. <u>Personal Social Media Accounts</u> Employees should be cognizant that comments or posts made on social media sites may be publicly accessible for an indefinite amount of time. Employees should consider how their posts on personal social media may reflect on the District, coworkers, and themselves. The following specific requirements apply to personal social media accounts: a) Employees who identify themselves as District employees on their personal social media sites must state that the opinions expressed are personal and do not reflect the views of the Providence Public School District. b) PPSD employees and partners are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students. As such, employees and partners should not initiate communications—and should avoid communicating directly—with any current PPSD student through personal social media accounts. Instead, employees and partners should redirect students to District social media accounts. c) Employees and partners may not use District letterhead, logos, or images on personal social networking sites. d) Employees are individually responsible for the content of their personal social media accounts. The District will not be responsible for representing employees who individually incur legal action due to the content of their personal social media accounts.
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	e) The District may at any time, and for any reason, request that employees refrain from using their personal social media sites to conduct official District business. <u>Guidelines for District Social Media and Personal Social Media Accounts</u> Whether using District or personal social media accounts, District employees and District partners should follow established guidelines for conduct, including but not limited to the following: a) Posting threatening, harassing, racist, biased, derogatory, disparaging, or bullying comments toward or about any student, employee, parent, or District partner on any website or social media platform is unacceptable, and such acts may be subject to discipline. b) Posting identifying student information, including names, videos, and photographs on any social networking site or forum, is prohibited without the written, informed consent of the student’s parent or guardian in accordance with District policy and applicable state and federal laws. c) Confidential or privileged information about students or employees may not be shared on social media platforms. Employees and partners will be held responsible for disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential District information on any social media account. d) Employees and partners will report incidents related to bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse, or any other incident violating District policy or city, state, or federal laws that involves employees or students on social media sites, and shall follow the District protocols established for in-school incidents. <u>Digital Citizenship</u> District employees are encouraged to use social media professionally to engage students, parents, and District partners in positive and effective digital citizenship. <u>Crisis Communication</u> Employees will follow established protocol regarding communication on social media during school-based, or local or national emergencies.
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Training, Oversight, and Communication	1. District contractors, vendors, volunteers, and parents/guardians who work with or have contact with students must adhere to this policy. 2. The Communications division, or other division designated by the Superintendent, will provide guidance and technical assistance, as necessary, related to District social media sites. 3. The Social Media for Employees policy will be made available on the District website staff page, and referenced in the Human Resources policy handbook. 4. The Office of Human Resources will incorporate school board policies into ongoing educational and professional development training sessions for employees, as necessary and appropriate. 5. The Superintendent will oversee the annual review of this policy, and update as necessary to reflect new technology and applications. 6. Non-compliance with this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or non-renewal.
Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements	The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD personnel and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board Policies. In the event any part of any Policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of this Policy.
Legal Reference	15 U.S. Code Chapter 91 (Children's Internet Protection Act-CIPA) 15 U.S.C. 6501–6508 (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act-COPPA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99 (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act- FERPA) RIGL § 16-21-33 (Safe Schools Act) RIGL §5-37.3 (Confidentiality of Health Care Information Act) RIGL § 11-24-3 (Full and equal accommodations-nondiscrimination)
Cross Reference	PPSD Internet Acceptable Use Policy PPSD Students and Staff Bullying and Harassment Policy PPSD School Emergency Preparedness Plan: Critical Incident Report
History	Policy Committee Review: August 1, 2016; December 5, 2016 Approved by Board: January 9, 2017 Regulations Issued: January 2017 Amended: 10/20/21

I certify that I have reviewed , understand and have signed a hard copy of the Social Media Policy.

Last

First

Dates