



Board of Education Policy Committee

Policy GBS - Social Media

March 16, 2021

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Policy: GBS – Social Media

Status: Creation

Adopted: n/a

DRAFT POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance to CMS employees and facilitate the effective use of social media to further the educational goals of the District while ensuring that the proper safeguards are in place to protect students, staff, the District, and the integrity of the information and messages being conveyed.

Section I – Definitions

A. District Social Media Platform

For the purposes of this Policy, “professional social media platform” means any social media page, feed, or entry formally maintained by the District for official purposes. It includes sites and/or services such as Facebook; Twitter; Snapchat; Instagram; YouTube; and similar applications.

B. Professional Accounts

Professional social media accounts include any account on any platform that uses a CMS logo/brand, is maintained by a CMS employee, and purports to be an official account of the District.

C. Professional Account Official Purposes

Official purposes of a professional district social media platform may include, but are not limited to, communication; marketing/awareness campaigns; public notification; and/or publication of information and/or materials.



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Section II - Authoring Access on Professional Accounts

A. Superintendent Approval Required

All individuals wishing to have authoring access to professional social media sites must obtain written approval from the Superintendent. The Superintendent may delegate his/her approval authority to cabinet members, learning community superintendents, principals, or department directors, where appropriate.

A request for authoring access must be in writing and include the following: the specific platform to be used, the benefit to the District, the requested duration of the approval, the educational or administrative reasons for and benefits of such use, the school/department name and email address, and any other relevant information.

B. Authoring Approval Reserved Only for District Employees

Approval for authoring access shall be available only to District employees. Volunteers, visitors, parents and/or students shall not be granted permission to directly author, make changes to, be provided with usernames/passwords, or communicate via District social media accounts.

Section III - Use of Professional Social Media for District Purposes

A. General Requirement

All social media entries and corresponding links must be consistent with the educational objectives of the District and may not be used for personal or non-District purposes. The school/department name and email shall be used for registration of the social media sites, and personal information of the site administrator shall not be used. The Superintendent or designee shall have the authority to remove any non-compliant materials.



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1 Exceptions to the prohibitions set forth in this Policy may be made for
2 health, safety, or emergency reasons with superintendent/designee
3 approval.

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5 **B. Compliance with Other Applicable Laws and Board Policies**

6 All materials posted on social media platforms on behalf of the District
7 must comply with all applicable laws and Board policies, including, but
8 not limited to, the District’s Nondiscrimination, Acceptable Use,
9 Copyright Infringement, and Protection of District Intellectual Property
10 policies, as well as policies prohibiting inappropriate or unlawful speech
11 and unlawful conduct.

12
13 **C. Prohibition of Social Media Interaction with Third Parties**

14 District personnel are prohibited from using any District social media
15 account to “follow”, “like”, “friend” or otherwise engage and/or interact
16 with other accounts, users, and/or third parties through its social media
17 accounts. This prohibition does not extend to other District social media
18 pages. For instance, the District may “follow”, “like”, or “share” an
19 approved District athletic social media account, site, entity, or entry but
20 may not “follow”, “like”, or “share” a post by an individual, company,
21 politician, or postings of any other any non-District, non-approved
22 corporate, government or personal social media accounts/sites.

23
24 **D. Commercial, Religious, Political Communication Restriction**

25 The District’s social media sites may not be used for commercial,
26 religious, political, or for-profit activities and/or communication. The
27 District’s social media entries and communications are prohibited from
28 including links to third-party sites with a commercial, political, and/or
29 religious purpose. Links to sites selling products; advertising goods
30 and/or services; and/or containing language, images and/or materials
31 that are in violation of District policy are strictly prohibited.

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33 **E. Responsibility of Platform**



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1 Each employee who is administering a professional district social media
2 platform has the responsibility to understand the rules of the social
3 media site being utilized. Employees, while on duty and off duty, will
4 treat fellow employees, students and the public with respect while
5 posting on social media platforms and all communications will be
6 appropriate and professional. Communications with students regarding
7 non-school related matters is prohibited.

8
9 Employees are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal
10 for using a District social media site in any manner that is illegal or
11 violates the terms of this Policy.

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13 **Section IV - Deletion of Information/Records Retention**

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15 **A. Public Records**

16 A public commenter's name and email address are not private
17 information and are subject to disclosure in accordance with state public
18 records laws.

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20 **B. Deletion of Information**

21 A post that contains vulgar, profane, or racist words; is discriminatory,
22 harassing, threatening; is a violation of privacy; or is a violation of this
23 Policy will be deleted in its entirety.

24
25 **C. Records Retention**

26 All deleted posts will be retained in accordance with state public records
27 laws.

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29 **Section VI - Personal Social Media Use**

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31 **A. Personal Use Defined**

32 Personal use is defined as use of social media by an employee
33 speaking as a private citizen and not on behalf of the District.
34 Employee speech engaged in as a private citizen may be protected by



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1 the First Amendment. However, when an employee makes
2 statements in the course of employment or related to his/her job
3 duties, the employee’s speech is not subject to First Amendment
4 protection.

5
6 The First Amendment does not protect employee speech that
7 constitutes a true threat; fighting words; call to illegal action;
8 obscenity; child pornography; defamation; perjury; plagiarism;
9 solicitation to commit a crime; or blackmail.

10
11 **B. Prohibition of Use of Personal Social Media for School Purposes**

12 District employees, including teachers, administrators, coaches, and
13 guidance counselors, are prohibited from utilizing their personal
14 social media accounts for official school purposes, such as
15 communicating assignments to students; providing directions or
16 instructions to an athletic team; posting or communicating
17 cancelation and other status updates regarding school-sponsored
18 events; communicating to students regarding classwork or
19 assignments, etc.

20
21 **C. Limitations on Personal Social Media Use**

22 As a public employee, use of social media is considered an extension
23 of the workplace as it relates to employee conduct. Inappropriate
24 personal usage of social media may be grounds for disciplinary action,
25 up to and including dismissal from employment. CMS employees’
26 personal use is subject to these guidelines:

- 27 1. Employees must comply with all District policies, including but
28 not limited to standards of conduct and harassment policies.
- 29 2. Administrators, teachers, education specialists, and licensed
30 employees must at all times conform to the Standards of
31 Professional Conduct for North Carolina Educators contained in
32 the North Carolina Administrative Code.
- 33 3. Employees shall not access social media accounts for individual
34 or personal use during school and work hours.



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- 1 4. Employees shall not use District devices to access social media
- 2 accounts for individual or personal use.
- 3 5. Employees shall not post confidential employee or student
- 4 information as outlined in Board policies.
- 5 6. Employees shall not post comments that are hateful, racist,
- 6 obscene, or vulgar.
- 7 7. Employees shall not post any comments, data, documents,
- 8 photos or inappropriate information that creates a disruption
- 9 in the school environment.
- 10 8. Employees shall not post any comments, data, documents,
- 11 photos or inappropriate information that interferes with the
- 12 efficient operation of the District or undermines the
- 13 effectiveness of the workplace.
- 14 9. Employees shall never use their personal social media accounts
- 15 in any way that purports to speak for the District.
- 16 10. Employees shall not use the CMS logo or any CMS school or
- 17 department logo on their personal social media account. Use of
- 18 the CMS logo that is automatically populated on professional
- 19 social media sites, such as LinkedIn, is permitted.
- 20 11. Employees shall not post images of District facilities, staff,
- 21 students, volunteers or parents without written authorization
- 22 from persons with authority to grant such a release.
- 23 12. Fraternization between employees and students is prohibited
- 24 and in violation of Board policies.
- 25 13. Personal use of social media may not violate or infringe upon
- 26 the right of any other person or entity or constitute a criminal
- 27 offense.

28
29 Any employee taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing obscene,
30 pornographic or otherwise illegal images or photographs, will be
31 reported to CMS law enforcement and/or other appropriate state or
32 federal agencies and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and
33 including dismissal.