



POLICY NO. 6200 SOCIAL MEDIA USE

POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education welcomes the responsible use of social media technologies and other forms of electronic communication to support learning and for School District business and communication purposes. This Policy and Regulations have been developed to provide employees with guidelines to understand the impact of social media and electronic communications and their appropriate uses in order to ensure professional communication standards and to mitigate both the School District's and employee's exposure to risk.

The Board of Education recognizes the open nature of social media which is often used for both personal and professional purposes. However, professionalism remains of utmost importance. It may not always be clear when one is speaking on behalf of the District, sharing facts, or sharing personal/professional opinions. It is important to remember that we are subject to the same laws, policies, and expectations when interacting online as we would in-person.

This Policy is designed to clarify employee's responsibilities when posting material online and exchanging electronic communications with students, parents and co-workers. This Policy and its Regulations apply to social media use and other electronic communications by employees whether during the hours of work or at other times, on the District network or from outside the District network, and on District devices or personal devices. Social media and electronic communications are subject to review by the Board of Education as reasonably required, including to investigate complaints of inappropriate use. Breach of this Policy and Regulations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

References:

BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)
School District No. 6 Guiding Principles
Policy 6190 – Information and Technology Management Acceptable Use



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REGULATIONS

1. Definitions

- 1.1 “**Social media**” refers to all internet-based applications and technologies which provide for the creation, exchange or sharing of information, opinions, commentary, personal messages and other user generated content, including but not limited to the use of social networks, digital citizenship, digital footprint, blogging, tweeting, wikis, podcasts, video casts, video, audio, media, social bookmarking, postings through apps using mobile devices using iOS or Android operating systems and also including current top examples: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, YouTube, Google+ and Google Hangout.
- 1.2 “**Electronic communications**” refers to any written, audio, video, visual or digital communications occurring between employees or any one or more individuals through electronic means, including email, texting and other messaging services whether or not such communications are internet based.

2 No Expectation of Privacy

- 2.1 Employees should understand that there is no expectation of privacy in the use of social media or electronic communications, insofar as online and other electronically recorded communications may potentially be read or accessed by third parties or transferred to others without the knowledge or consent of the creator.

3 Responsibility of Employees

- 3.1 Employees are responsible for their electronic communications and for any content that they publish online, whether it is under the employee's own name, an alias or is anonymous, and must ensure it complies with applicable laws, School District Policy (including this Policy and Regulations, and Policy 6190, Information and Technology Management Acceptable use Policy), and professional standards of conduct, including those of the Ministry of Education, Teacher Regulation Branch. This expectation of conduct includes a responsibility to ensure that contributions to any site that is created by an employee are monitored, administered and moderated to ensure compliance with this Policy and Regulations.
- 3.2 Inappropriate communications through the use of social media or other electronic devices are subject to the same policies and principles as other forms of work related misconduct. Employees have a responsibility to make appropriate reports to the School District about breaches of this Policy or the misuse of these technologies, including where such communications negatively impact students, the workplace or the reputation of the School District.

4 General Code of Conduct

- 4.1 Anything posted online by employees or communicated electronically to third parties may be perceived to be representative of the School District. Therefore, employees are expected to model an appropriate online presence and to exercise good judgment to ensure that postings and communications do not reflect negatively on the employee's professional reputation or that of the School District. This may require employees to take reasonable steps to monitor and exercise appropriate controls over their online presence, including by requesting that friends and third parties not post photos, videos or other online content depicting or pertaining to the employee that is not appropriate to the employee's role in the School District.
- 4.2 Employee communications and online behaviour should also be consistent with and reflect the Rocky Mountain School District Guiding Principles <http://www.sd6.bc.ca/guiding.php>. What is inappropriate in the workplace is also inappropriate online, and when expressed in other electronic communications, including criticizing students, employees, parents or the School District. Electronic communications and online posts involving students, co-workers, or parents should at all times be professional in nature. Electronic communications

and online activities must not interfere with the performance of an employee's employment responsibilities.

- 4.3 Employees must ensure that any information they post online or distribute through other electronic communications does not breach the privacy or confidentiality of another person. The use or disclosure of "personal information" of co-workers, students or parents in connection with social networking websites and services and through other electronic communications may be subject to the *British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA), and other privacy laws. It may also be subject to other legal obligations of confidentiality. (For example, photos of co-workers, students or workplace events should not be posted online without the consent of the affected individuals).
- 4.4 Employees must in their use of social media respect and model copyright and fair use guidelines. Employees must not plagiarize, and must properly acknowledge the authorship of materials posted by them. When using a hyperlink to attribute authorship, employees must be sure that the content of the linked site is appropriate and adheres to School District policies.
- 4.5 When posting online content employees should not speak on behalf of the School District or use School District logos on private social media sites unless specifically authorized to do so.
- 4.6 Employees should pay particular attention to the privacy settings for their personal social media page. Some content that is appropriate for personal friends is not appropriate for circulation to work colleagues, parents and students. However, employees should not look to the privacy settings on their personal social media page as creating anonymity or as a guarantee postings will not be shared more broadly.

5 Communications with Students and Parents

- 5.1 The School District recognizes that there are potential benefits to the use of social media and other electronic communications as an educational tool. However, employees must at all times ensure that social media and electronic communications use for communicating with parents and students is consistent with appropriate professional boundaries and the policies and practices of the School District.

- 5.2 All communications with students and parents through social media and through other electronic communications must be formal, courteous, respectful and appropriate. They should not involve or be linked to social media sites of a personal nature that may be maintained by the employee. For example, employees should not invite, or accept invitations from students to participate as “friends” on a personal Facebook page (this is not intended to interfere with a parent/guardian’s right to monitor the online activities of their own child).
- 5.3 Only School District authorized social media tools are to be used for online communication with students and parents. Should employees wish to create other sites and/or use other online forums for communicating with students or parents, they must obtain approval from their school Principal who will use the principles outlined in section 4 of this policy as a guide in making the decision.
- 5.4 Employees are responsible for ensuring that any use of social media or other electronic communications with students complies with the student Acceptable Use Agreement. Any personal student information that is posted to social media websites or circulated in other electronic communications while the student is under an employee’s supervision must be compliant with the permission granted by the student’s parents/guardians in a signed District Media Release form.