



# Policy No. 306

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring that all students and staff, who utilize social media technology for professional purposes, do so in a safe and responsible manner. School District 87 Stikine strives to create professional social media environments that mirror the academically supportive environments of our schools.

Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning. This technology can provide both educational and professional benefits, including preparing students to succeed in their educational and career endeavors.

This Social Media policy provides direction regarding recommended practices for professional social media communication between employees, as well as social media communication between employees and students. In recognition of the public and pervasive nature of social media communications, as well as the fact that in this digital era, the lines between professional and personal endeavors are sometimes blurred, this policy also addresses caveats for use of personal social media by staff.

This policy is not designed to serve as a code of conduct for social media use. However, all existing policies and procedures, and legislation that cover employee conduct may be applicable in the social media environment.

This policy does not address student-to-student communication via social media. Each school has a procedure that is specific to student use of technology and social media.

### GUIDING LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS

- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA):* Sections 8, 17, 20, 22, 65 and 85
- *Copyright Act*

### REGULATIONS

#### **Definition of Social Media**

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Flickr, TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram.

1. **Professional social media** is a work-related social media activity that is either support services based or school based (e.g., a principal establishing a Facebook page for his/her school or a teacher establishing a blog for his/her class).
2. **Personal social media** use is a non- work-related social media activity (e.g., a employee establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for his/her own personal use).

### **Professional Social Media Use**

1. Maintenance of separate Professional and Personal Email Accounts  
Employees who engage in professional social media activities must maintain separate professional (district) and personal email addresses. As such, employees must not use their personal email address for professional social media activities. The professional social media presence will utilize a district email address and must be completely separate from any personal social media presence maintained by the employee.
2. Communication with Students  
Employees who work with students and choose to communicate with students through professional social media sites will follow these guidelines:
  - a. Professional social media sites that are school-based will be designed to address reasonable instructional, educational or extra-curricular program matters;
  - b. Professional social media sites that are non-school based will have a reasonable relationship to the mission and function of the organization creating the site;
  - c. Employees will inform their supervisor before setting up a professional social media presence and acknowledge they have read and understood the Social Media Policy; and
  - d. Professional social media sites should include language identifying the sites as professional social media sites. For example, the professional sites can identify the school, department or particular grade that is utilizing the site and be linked to the school or district website.
3. Guidance Regarding Professional Social Media Sites
  - a. Employees will treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or a professional workplace. The same standards expected in School District 87 Stikine's professional settings are expected on professional social media sites.
  - b. Employees will exercise caution, sound judgment, and common sense when using professional social media sites.
  - c. Employees will use privacy settings to control access to their professional social media sites to ensure that professional social media communications only reach the employees' intended audience. However, employees should be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication

published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. Employees are responsible for understanding the rules of the social media site being utilized prior to utilizing the site.

- d. Professional social media communication must be in compliance with existing school district regulations, policies and applicable laws, including, but not limited to, prohibitions on the disclosure of confidential information and prohibitions on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory or threatening language.
- e. No personally identifiable student information may be posted by any employee on professional social media sites, including student photographs, without the consent of the students' parents.

#### 4. Monitoring of Professional Social Media Sites

- a. Employees using professional social media have no expectation of privacy with regard to their use of such media.
- b. School and District administration reserve the right to remove, disable, and provide feedback regarding professional social media sites that do not adhere to the law or do not reasonably align with this Policy.
- c. To assist in monitoring, as a recommended practice to the extent possible, the default setting for comments on professional social media sites should be turned off or moderated regularly. If the default setting for comments is turned on, the comments on the site must be monitored on a daily basis by the user.
- d. When establishing professional social media sites, staff will consider the intended audience for the site and consider the level of privacy assigned to the site, specifically, whether the site should be a private network (for example, it is limited to a particular class or particular grade within a school) or a public network (for example, anyone within the school or a larger group within the school community can participate). It is a recommended practice for professional social media sites to be private networks, unless there is a specific educational need for the site to be a public network.
- e. School and/or District administrators will maintain documentation of all reported noncompliant communications as well as any violations that are otherwise brought to the supervisor's attention.

#### 5. Media Inquiries

Any media inquiries received via professional social media sites should be referred to the Superintendent and/or Secretary Treasurer.

## **Personal Social Media Use**

### **1. Communication with Students**

In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, employees should not communicate with students who are currently enrolled in schools on personal social media sites.

### **2. Guidance Regarding Personal Social Media Sites**

Employees should exercise caution and common sense when using personal social media sites:

- a. As a recommended practice, employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees have a personal responsibility to understand the rules of the social media site being utilized.
- b. Employees will not “tag” photos of other employees without the prior permission of the individuals being tagged.
- c. Personal social media use, including off-hours use, has the potential to result in disruption at school and/or the workplace, and can be in violation of the Information and Technology Management Acceptable Use Policy.
- d. The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites is prohibited.