

School District #62 (Sooke)

SOCIAL MEDIA - EMPLOYEES	No.: B-118
	Effective: Jan. 25/22 Revised: Reviewed: Nov. 2/21; Nov. 23/21;

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Context

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, these regulations also address caveats for use of personal social media by staff.

Every time a person communicates, whether it is in-person or on social media, the public opinion is shaped about that person, his/her profession, school, board and public education. Statements like *"Tweets are my own and do not reflect those of my employer's"* does not hold true for educators.

These regulations are meant to provide general guidance and not cover every potential social media situation.

Definition

"Social media" refers to all internet-based technology tools that enable people or organizations to communicate, share information and resources, collaborate, message other users, etc. online. Social media includes, but is not limited to: Blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, instant messaging, texting, video streaming and posting through apps on mobile devices. Platform examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube and Snap Chat, TikTok, Google+ and Google Hangouts.

1. Personal Use and Responsibility

- 1.1 Employees should understand that there is no expectation of privacy in the use of social media or electronic communications, and that online and other electronically recorded communications may potentially be read, accessed or published by third parties or transferred to others without the knowledge or consent of the creator.
- 1.2 SD62 employees are personally responsible for the professional and personal content they publish online.
- 1.3 Anything posted by an employee to non-school district parties may be perceived to be an official representative of the school district.
- 1.4 All employees are encouraged to model an appropriate online presence and to exercise good judgement to ensure that postings do not reflect negatively on the employee's professional reputation or that of the school district. What is inappropriate in the workplace is also inappropriate online, including criticizing students, administrators, fellow employees, the school district or Board of Education.

- 1.5 When commenting on ministry directions, other school districts, other school boards and community organizations, all employees are encouraged to maintain a professional tone while exercising their right to express their opinion.
- 1.6 Employees should not speak on behalf of SD62 or use district logos on private social media sites unless they are authorized to do so by the Superintendent or District Communications Department.
- 1.7 SD62 employees should not 'friend' students to their personal social media sites, especially if there is a student/teacher relationship and should not request or accept any students as 'friends' on social media sites. Employees should also refrain from interacting with students on social media sites for purposes not related to the delivery of the student's educational program.
- 1.8 Employees should be aware of any policies, privacy features and limitations on social media platforms that they use.
- 1.9 Confidential/sensitive information pertaining to the employee's role in the school district or information involving the operation of SD62 that is/was obtained through the course of employment shall not be disclosed on social media sites without permission.
- 1.10 Policy and Regulations B-117 "Acceptable Use of Technology" provides standards associated and relevant to these guidelines.
- 1.11 Social media may be used to highlight and celebrate unique educational and school events or events of general interest to the community. In cases where personal information or images are used, consent must be obtained.
- 1.12 District operational issues should be communicated using targeted platforms where possible instead of social media and concurrent with specific information individually communicated to impacted staff, students and families.

2. Employee Use of Professional Social Media Sites

- 2.1. 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 used for communicating with parents and students is consistent with appropriate professional boundaries and the policies, procedures, and practices of the School District.
- 2.2. Use of social networking websites and services must adhere to the British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA), the guidelines for teachers from the BC Ministry of Education, BCSTA, CUPE and the body that regulates teacher conduct, particularly where issues related to personal information are concerned.
- 2.3. Any use of social media related to work or school that involves students or other SD62 employees must be of a professional, rather than personal, nature and adhere to district and professional codes of conduct. Online activities must not interfere with the performance of an employee's duties or their effectiveness as an employee of the school district.
- 2.4. Employees who use social media for professional purposes must use a professional email address; accounts must be completely separate from personal email or social accounts.

- 2.5. Users of professional social media sites are responsible for complying with all applicable federal, provincial and local legislation.
- 2.6. All existing Board policies and District procedures, and legislation that cover employee conduct may be applicable in the social media environment.

3. General School Use of Professional Social Media Sites

- 3.1. 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, procedures, and practices of the School District.
- 3.2. Use authorized school district sites and tools for online communication with students and parents. Should employees wish to create other sites and/or use other online forums for communicating with students, parents, or the community, they must obtain approval from the principal and/or department supervisor.
- 3.3. Annually, school administrators will distribute guidelines to students explaining appropriate students' use of social media for school related activities (not students' personal use).
- 3.4. All professional social media sites are to be set-up with the highest setting level for blocking profanity and/or obscenity. When required, access must be appropriately restricted (i.e. limited to students assigned to a class or activity). Employees are responsible for understanding privacy settings of social media sites.
- 3.4. All new professional social media sites are to be set up using the school or program name and email address (i.e. schoolname@sd62.bc.ca). No sites should be set up using specific employee information. Existing school and/or district social media sites should be changed to a school/program email address, where possible.
- 3.5. All professional social media site email addresses and passwords are to be kept on file with school administration, so that there is an ability to pass the information along in the event of personnel changes or to suspend the site, if necessary.
- 3.6. All public-facing social media sites representing a school are required to be active, meaning that there is a commitment to regular posting of current and relevant content while school is in session. If a site becomes inactive for a period greater than four months during, it must be shut down.
- 3.7. All professional social media sites are to be maintained by a school administrator/supervisor or a school/district employee delegated by the school administrator/supervisor. Responsibility is not to be delegated to a parent volunteer or student, as the established social media site will represent SD62. Official school district social media account login credentials must be shared with the school administrator.
- 3.8. Employees are required to monitor contributions to any site they create, administer or moderate for professional purposes. Posts that are not in keeping with the spirit of the page should be removed immediately.

- 3.9. Any use of social media that involves students must be focused on teaching and learning, and not linked to personal sites.
- 3.10. Employees are responsible for ensuring that any use of social media or other electronic communications with students complies with School District policies. 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.
- 3.11. SD62 is not responsible for social media accounts established and maintained by school or district Parent Advisory Councils.
- 3.12. The School District reserves 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 these regulations.

4. Copyright and Fair Use

- 4.1. Employees must respect and model copyright and fair use guidelines. A hyperlink citation to outside sources is required. Employees must not plagiarize and must give credit where it is due.
5. **Employees who do not follow these terms and conditions may face disciplinary action.**

Appendix

Guidelines for Student use of social media and electronic technology

DEFINITION

Online technology tools that enable people or organizations to communicate, share information and resources, collaborate, message other users, etc. over the Internet. Social media includes, but is not limited to: Blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, instant messaging, texting and video streaming and posting through apps on mobile devices. Platform examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube and Snap Chat, TikTok, Google+ and Google Hangouts.

These regulations are meant to provide general guidance and not cover every potential social media situation.

1. Student online behaviour should reflect the Sooke School District values of relationships, choice, respect, integrity, trust, safety, diversity and equity.
2. Online activities related to school are an extension of the classroom and subject to all school and district expectations. Student online behavior should reflect their school and/or SD62's Code of Conduct.
3. Students should report any content or behavior through school-related social media that is not suitable for the school environment.
4. Students should consider the potential consequences of what they post online. What students contribute leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Students should only post what they want friends, peers, teachers, or a future employer to see. Links to other websites should be appropriate for their school setting.
5. Students should be safe online; they should never give out personal information, including last names, birthdates, phone numbers, addresses, and pictures. Students should not share their password with anyone except their parents/guardians.
6. Students must not intentionally misrepresent themselves or use someone else's identity.
7. Students are responsible for the work they create. They should not use intellectual property without permission. When paraphrasing another's idea(s), the sources must be cited.
8. Pictures are protected under copyright and protection of privacy laws.
9. Students who do not follow these terms and conditions may face disciplinary action.