



Book	BHASD Policies
Section	800 Operations
Title	Social Media
Code	815.5
Status	Active
Adopted	February 4, 2019

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the orderly operation of the District’s schools by establishing standards for the operation of school district social media accounts and personal social media accounts, and to differentiate between personal and third party social media accounts and those accounts controlled by the District.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent shall develop procedures to implement this policy, and may delegate to his/her designee(s) the right to enforce this policy.

Definitions

Discriminatory or Harassing Comments – comments or imagery that attack or mock an individual due to his/her real or perceived race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Limited Public Forum – a government operated location where the public may comment and post online, subject to viewpoint neutral guidelines.

Non-public Forum – a government operated location where the public may not comment or post online; free expression by the public is restricted regardless of message or viewpoint.

Personal Social Media Account – a social media account, regardless of platform, that is operated by a school district employee or school board member for his/her personal use, including personal professional development. A personal account is not regularly used to promote or communicate about school district events or activities, or the activities of students.

School District Social Media Account – a social media account, regardless of platform, that is operated by a school district employee or school board member in his/her professional capacity, and that is designed to further the educational mission of the school district by communicating with members of the school district community and the general public.

Third Party Social Media Account – a social media account, regardless of platform, that is operated by a volunteer, student, parent, alumnus, or other member of the public on behalf of a club, foundation, sports team, or other extracurricular group affiliated with the school district. Third party social media accounts are not operated by school district employees or school board members.

Guidelines

If any social media post is published using school district technology resources, including computing devices, mobile devices, and networks, the District's acceptable use policy applies and is hereby incorporated by reference. [\[1\]](#)

SCHOOL DISTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

School District social media accounts must remain professional, and consistent with the educational mission of the school district at all times. The operators of school district social media accounts are responsible for the content on the social media accounts that they manage.

Account Ownership

School District social media accounts are owned by the School District, and operated by school district employees or school board members on behalf of the School District. The Director of Technology shall maintain a list of all social media accounts operated by the School District, along with a list of credentials to access the accounts.

Photos, Videos, & Livestreams of Students

School District social media account operators may post photographs, videos, and livestreams of students engaged in the educational process or at school-related events unless the student's parents have opted the student out of FERPA's directory information sharing, or if parents have declined to sign the District's media release form. The operators of School District social media accounts are responsible for complying with this provision.

Public Comments

All School District social media accounts shall operate as either a non-public forum (where the public may not comment on the District's posts), or as a limited public forum, where the public may comment publicly on the District's posts – subject to certain guidelines.

Whether a social media account is operated as a non-public forum or limited public forum shall be determined by the account operator.

School District social media accounts that operate as a limited public forum shall include a prominent link to the following comment guidelines, posted on the School District's website:

1. Comments must be related to the original School District post
2. No personal attacks
3. No lewd, vulgar, or obscene posts
4. No discriminatory or harassing comments
5. No posts promoting violence or illegal conduct

Individual comments or posts that violate the above guidelines may be deleted (if possible given the social media platform) without further notice. Posts may not be deleted simply because they are critical of the School District, or because they promote an unpopular opinion, if the post otherwise complies with the above guidelines.

School District social media account operators may not block users from accessing the School District's social media posts. The Director of Technology shall refer any user who repeatedly violates the above guidelines to the Superintendent for further investigation and potential legal remedies.

Tagging

School District social media account operators may tag the social media accounts of educational applications, products, and services, so long as the District and its employees do not receive financial or other tangible compensation for the tag.

School District social media account operators shall not tag individual students using their social media usernames or handles, but may tag other adult members of the school district community.

School District social media accounts shall not be used to communicate directly with students. One-to-one communication with a student shall be limited to electronic resources provided by the District such as e-mail or classroom management applications.

Accessibility

All content posted to School District social media accounts shall be as accessible to individuals with disabilities as it is to non-disabled individuals. To ensure accessibility, so long as the social media platform allows, social media posts must:

1. include alternate text or detailed captions for images
2. include captions for videos
3. include captions for livestreams
4. avoid images of text
5. avoid acronyms, wherever possible
6. ensure that links to PDFs are accessible to screen readers

Copyright

The copyright for all content posted to School District social media accounts must be either owned by the School District, licensed by the copyright owner, or not subject to copyright protection. The operator of a School District social media account is responsible for ensuring compliance with this provision.

Retweets / Reposts

School District social media accounts may highlight social media posts by others by retweeting or reposting their messages, so long as the retweet/repost follows these guidelines.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

School district employees may not use personal social media accounts to communicate privately (via direct message or private chat) with students concerning any school district business. One-to-one communication with a student concerning any school district business shall be limited to the electronic resources provided by the District such as e-mail or classroom management applications.

School district employees are urged to exercise extreme caution before communicating with students via social media about non-school matters. Such electronic communication may cross professional boundaries in violation of the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators, and the Educator Discipline Act. School district employees are urged to maintain strict professional boundaries on social media, and to protect against even the appearance of impropriety.

School district employees and board members shall not post personally identifiable and otherwise confidential information from educational records on their personal social media accounts. Personally identifiable information includes information that could indirectly identify a student through linkages with other information.

School district employees are strongly encouraged to utilize privacy settings on personal social media accounts to ensure that a professional boundary is maintained between the employee and students and parents.

The School District does not actively monitor personal social media accounts for its employees. Nonetheless, should the School District administration or school board's attention be brought to a personal social media post that demonstrates insubordination, immorality, cruelty, unlawful discrimination, other unlawful act(s), or that impedes the efficient and effective operation of the school district, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

THIRD PARTY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Third party social media accounts are not operated or controlled by the School District. These accounts are privately created and maintained, and are not actively monitored by the District.

Third party social media accounts may not use the School District's logo, unless given express written permission by the Superintendent.

The School District encourages the operators of all third party social media accounts to be good-faith ambassadors of the school district, and to operate these private social media accounts in a manner that represents the School District in a positive light.

Consequences for Violation of this policy

Employees that violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Legal

1. Policy 815