

## 7544 - USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Technology is a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning.

The School Board authorizes the use of social media to promote community involvement and facilitate effective communication with students, parents/guardians, staff ~~(-) (including District-approved volunteers)~~ **[END OF OPTION]**, and the general public. Social media is defined in Bylaw 0100.

The Superintendent is charged with designating the District-approved social media platforms/sites, consistent with the Florida Department of Management Service's (DMS) list of prohibited applications ~~(-)~~, which shall be listed on the District's website. **[END OF OPTION]**.

In designating District-approved social media platforms/sites, the Superintendent shall specify which platforms/sites are strictly prohibited for all uses and which ones may be appropriate for use at the District-level, the building or department level, for extra-curricular activities, and at the individual level by employees for professional purposes.

Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms through the use of Internet access provided by the District except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.

It is critical that students be taught how to use social media platforms safely and responsibly. Social media (as defined in Bylaw 0100) are a powerful and pervasive technology that affords students and employees the opportunity to communicate for school and work purposes, and to collaborate in the delivery of a comprehensive education. Federal law mandates that the District provide for the education of students regarding appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and regarding cyberbullying awareness and response. See School Board Policy 7540.03 – *Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety*.

The District recognizes that employees may use social media for personal, as well as professional reasons. The District neither encourages nor discourages employees' use of social media for personal purposes. The District regulates employees' use of social media for purposes related to their District assignment to the same extent as it regulates any other form of employee communication in that regard.

**[DRAFTING NOTE: Districts should consult with their legal counsel concerning the First Amendment implications associated with using social media that permits public comment. Select Option 1 or 2.]**

**[X] [Option 1]**

The District uses approved social media platforms/sites as interactive forms of communication.

~~**[ ] [Option 2]**~~

~~The District uses approved social media platforms/sites as interactive forms of communication and ( ) accepts ( ) invites ( ) welcomes **[END OF OPTIONS]** public comments. The District-approved social media platforms/sites are considered limited public forums. As such, the District will monitor posted comments to verify they are on-topic, consistent with the posted rules for use of the forum, and in compliance with the platform/site's applicable terms of service. The Board's review of posted comments will be conducted in a viewpoint neutral manner, and consistent with State and Federal law. Employees' personal posts on the public platforms/sites are limited/restricted to matters of general public interest that are not related to the employee's specific employment and wholly unrelated to the employee's job responsibilities (i.e., matters where it is clear the individual is posting not in an official capacity, but simply as a member of the public). Employees in administrative positions are ordinarily not permitted to post personal comments on matters of general public interest because to do so could be misconstrued as Board-sponsored speech.~~

~~Each District-approved social media account/site must contain a statement that specifies its purpose(s) and limits those who access the social media account/site to use of the account/site only for that/those purpose(s) and in accordance with any specified procedures and applicable terms of service. Users are personally responsible for the content of their posts.~~

**[END OF OPTIONS 1 & 2]**

**Social Media for Instructional and School-Sponsored Activities**

Staff may, with prior approval/authorization from the (X) Principal, ~~( ) Superintendent, ( )~~, ~~[END OF OPTIONS]~~ use social media platforms/sites for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities. However, the use of TikTok or any successor platform is prohibited on District-owned devices, through Internet access provided by the District, or as a platform to communicate or promote any District school, school-sponsored club, extra-curricular organization, or athletic team. When a staff member uses a District-approved social media platform/site for an educational purpose, it will be considered an educational activity and will not be considered a limited public forum. Students' use of District-approved social media platforms/sites must be consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, Policy 5722 – *School-Sponsored Student Publications and Productions/AP 5722 - School Publications/Productions*, Policy 7540.03 – *Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety*, the instructor's directions/procedures, and the platform/site's applicable terms of service. Students are prohibited from posting or releasing personally identifiable information about students, employees, through District-approved social media, without appropriate consent.

#### **Expected Standards of Conduct on District-Approved Social Media**

Employees ~~( )~~ and District approved volunteers ~~[END OF OPTION]~~ who access District-approved social media platforms are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner. Students, parents, and members of the general public who access District-approved social media platforms are similarly expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and civil manner.

District-approved social media sites must comply with DMS's current list of prohibited applications and shall not contain content that is obscene; is vulgar and lewd such that it undermines the school's basic educational mission; is libelous or defamatory; constitutes hate speech; promotes illegal drug use; is aimed at inciting an individual to engage in unlawful acts or to cause a substantial disruption or material interference with District operations; or interferes with the rights of others. The District may exercise editorial control over the style and content of student speech on District-approved social media if reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns. Staff or students who post prohibited content shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The District is committed to protecting the privacy rights of students, parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, Board members, and other individuals on District-approved social media sites. District employees ~~( )~~ and ~~volunteers [END OF OPTION]~~ are prohibited from posting or releasing confidential information about students, employees, volunteers, or District operations through social media, without appropriate consent (i.e., express written consent from the parent of a student, the affected employee or volunteer, or the Superintendent concerning District operations).

#### **Retention of Public/Student Records**

District communications that occur through the use of District-approved social media platforms/sites – including staff members' ~~( )~~ /volunteers' ~~[END OF OPTION]~~ use of social media with school-sponsored activities, and comments, replies, and messages received from the general public – may constitute public records or student records, and all such communications will be maintained (i.e., electronically archived) in accordance with the Board's adopted record retention schedule and all applicable State statutes.

**[DRAFTING NOTE: Districts should only choose the following Option if they intend to approve individual District employees/volunteers using social media platforms, like Facebook or X (formerly Twitter), that require professional pages to be linked to personal pages as District-approved social media platforms. Districts are advised to discuss this Option with their local legal counsel before selecting it. Selection of this Option is not covered by Neola's warranty.]**

(X) Staff members ~~( )~~ and District approved volunteers ~~[END OF OPTION]~~ cannot rely on social networking platforms (e.g., Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), etc.) to sufficiently fulfill potential records retention requirements because these platforms, in general, do not guarantee retention and are unlikely to assist in the production of third-party comments and communications that have been edited, deleted, or are otherwise no longer available. Consequently, District employees ~~( )~~ and ~~volunteers [END OF OPTION]~~ who use such social media accounts for professional communications must operate them in accordance with the general archiving practices and technology instituted by the District so records remain within the District's control and are appropriately retained.

**[END OF OPTION]**  
If a staff member uses District-approved social media platforms/sites in the classroom for educational purposes (i.e., classroom instruction), the staff member must consult with the Principal concerning whether

such use may result in the creation of public and/or education records that must be maintained (i.e., electronically archived) for a specific period of time.

**[DRAFTING NOTE: Select Option 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7]**

**Employees' Use of District Technology Resources to Access Social Media for Personal Use**

Employees are permitted to use District technology resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to access social media for personal use during breaks, mealtimes, and before and after scheduled work hours, except they shall not download or access any prohibited application on DMS's current list using District technology.

They are reminded that the District may monitor their use of District technology resources.

**Employees' Use of Personal Communication Devices at Work to Access Social Media for Personal Use**

Employees are permitted to use personal communication devices to access social media for personal use during breaks and mealtimes.

Employees are prohibited from posting or engaging in communication that violates State or Federal law, Board policies, or administrative procedures. If an employee/volunteer's communication interferes with his/her ability to effectively perform his/her job or violates State or Federal law, Board policies, or administrative procedures, the District may impose disciplinary action and/or refer the matter to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

☐ **[Option 3]**

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Employees ( ) and District approved volunteers [END OF OPTION] are prohibited from using District technology resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to access social media for personal use.

☒ **[Option 4]**

Employees (X) and District approved volunteers [END OF OPTION] are prohibited from using District technology resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to access social media for personal use during work hours.

They are reminded that the District may monitor their use of District technology resourcesresources.

☐ **[Option 5]**

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Employees ( ) and District approved volunteers [END OF OPTION] are permitted to use District technology resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to access social media for personal use during breaks, mealtimes, and before and after scheduled work hours, except they shall not download or access any prohibited application on DMS's current list using District technology.

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They are reminded that the District may monitor their use of District technology resourcesresources.

☐ **[Option 6]**

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Employees ( ) and District approved volunteers [END OF OPTION] are permitted to use District technology resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to access social media for personal use during work hours, provided it does not interfere with the employee's ( ) / volunteer's [END OF OPTION] job performance, except they shall not download or access any prohibited application on DMS's current list using District technology.

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They are reminded that the District may monitor their use of District technology resourcesresources.

☐ **[Option 7]**

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Employees ( ) and District approved volunteers [END OF OPTION] are permitted to use District technology resources (as defined in Bylaw 0100) to access social media for personal use, provided the employee's ( ) / volunteer's [END OF OPTION] use during work hours does not interfere with his/her job performance, except they shall not download or access any prohibited application on DMS's current list using District technology.

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They are reminded that the District may monitor their use of District technology resources.

**[END OF OPTIONS 3-7]**

**[DRAFTING NOTE: Select Option 8, 9, or 10]**

#### **Employees' Use of Personal Communication Devices at Work to Access Social Media for Personal Use**

**[X] [Option 8]**

Employees are prohibited from using personal communication devices to access social media for personal use during work hours.

**[ ] [Option 9]**

Employees are permitted to use personal communication devices to access social media for personal use during breaks and mealtimes.

**[Option 10]**

Employees are permitted to use personal communication devices to access social media for personal use during work hours, provided it does not interfere with the employee's job performance.

**[END OF OPTIONS 8-10]**

Employees ~~( )~~ and District approved volunteers **[END OF OPTION]** are prohibited from posting or engaging in communication that violates State or Federal law, Board policies, or administrative procedures. If an employee/volunteer's communication interferes with his/her ability to effectively perform his/her job or violates State or Federal law, Board policies, or administrative procedures, the District may impose disciplinary action and/or refer the matter to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

This policy and its corresponding administrative procedure will be reviewed and updated

**(X)** as necessary

~~( )~~ on an annual basis.