

GCSB - Use of Social Media by School Employees

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The Board recognizes that social media sites have become important means of communication with potential pedagogical value. This policy sets forth expectations for school employees when using social media for school-related and personal purposes. Employees are expected to preserve the integrity of the learning environment in their use of social media, and must maintain professional boundaries with students at all times.

"Social media" shall mean technology and/or Internet-based tool(s) for communicating or sharing information, opinions and ideas with others, including but not limited to websites, blogs, forums, social networking, social networking and image sharing applications and news sites.

A. Approval Procedure

The use of social media for school-related purposes requires pre-approval in accordance with this policy.

A school employee who desires to use social media for school-related purposes shall submit a proposal and request for approval to their building principal/supervisor. Proposals for the school-related use of social media should include an articulated educational purpose and be appropriate to the students' ages, level(s) of understanding, and range(s) of knowledge. Use of social media with students is limited to grades seven and higher. Any student under 13 needs parent/guardian permission to access approved social media.

The building principal/supervisor or designee may take one of the following actions on a proposal: 1) approval; 2) approval with required modifications or 3) denial. The building principal/supervisor may consult with the Superintendent or others as appropriate in evaluating the request. Any decision on a use of social media by a staff member resulting from this policy can be appealed to the Superintendent. The decision of the Superintendent shall be in writing and the decision is final. Any later modifications to a proposal that has been already approved must also be pre-approved by the building principal/supervisor. The building principal/supervisor may withdraw his or her approval at any time.

Approved proposals for the school-related use of social media shall be resubmitted annually by September 30th for review. If an employee discontinues their use of approved social media, the building principal/supervisor shall be notified.

B. Terms of Use

The school-related use of social media approved in accordance with this policy shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Content on approved social media shall at all times comply with school unit policies, procedures and guidelines as well as with any applicable state and federal laws (including confidentiality laws).
2. The responsible school employee shall monitor any student use of the approved social media and shall remove content that violates school unit policies, procedures or guidelines, and/or state or federal laws. Any inappropriate use of approved social media shall be reported to the building principal/supervisor.
3. The school unit may monitor any approved social media for compliance with applicable policies, procedures, guidelines and/or laws.

C. Personal Use of Social Media

The Board understands that many school employees use social media for personal purposes on personal time. Employees shall keep their professional social media presence separate from their personal social media. Employees shall not use work time, school unit technology, or their work-issued email address for personal use of social media.

School employees are prohibited from “friending” students or engaging in any other interactions on social media (outside of any school-approved activity).

School employees shall not engage in conduct that violates Board policies, procedures and guidelines; which adversely affects their capacity to serve as a role model for students; or which distracts from or disrupts the educational process or the operations of the schools.

Violations of this policy may result in the withdrawal of approval to utilize social media for school purposes and/or disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances of each case.

Cross Reference: GCSA Employee Computer, Cell Phone, Electronic Devices, and Internet Use

GCSA-R Employee Computer and Internet Use Rules

GBEBB Staff Conduct with Students

GBEBA Staff Conduct, Ethics and Attire

IJNDB Student Computer and Internet Use

IJNDB Student Computer and Internet Use Rule

IJNDC-R Website Guidelines

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