

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

TITLE: RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

CATEGORY: EDUCATION

NUMBER: 1370

I. Rationale

Social media plays an important role in promoting positive, interactive, and professional communication across the school district community. The district recognizes the value of these platforms for connecting with students, families, staff, and the public, as well as showcasing educational programs, achievements, and district values.

This regulation supports responsible, respectful, and ethical use of social media that:

- Promotes digital citizenship and online safety.
- Protects privacy and upholds relevant legislation.
- Ensures professionalism, equity, and inclusivity in all communications.
- Reflects positively on the reputation of the Sunshine Coast School District.

II. Definitions

- **Social Media:** Any digital platform or application that allows users to create, share, or interact with content and one another (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, blogs, messaging or livestreaming services, and AI-generated content platforms).
- **User:** Any student, employee, contractor, volunteer, or community member engaged in school or district activities.
- **Official Account:** A social media account approved by and registered with the district, department or a school to represent that body officially.
- **School-Related Account:** Accounts managed by school staff or PACs for promoting school activities.
- **Personal Account:** An account used for private, non-district communication or opinions.

III. Procedures

A. Account Creation and Management

1. Departments or staff creating a **district-related account, including official school or department accounts**, must notify the district communications officer in writing. The district communications officer must be added as an admin to the account for succession planning and oversight.
2. Parent Advisory Councils or staff creating a **school-related account** must notify the principal in writing and add the principal as a member of the group.
3. All official accounts must:

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- Use secure passwords.
 - Store login credentials using district-approved secure methods.
 - Review access rights annually, especially during staffing transitions.
4. Inappropriate or harmful public comments on official accounts may be removed, hidden, or reported and individual profiles blocked at the district's discretion.
 5. The communications officer will maintain a registry of active official district-related accounts.
 6. The principal will maintain an annual list of any school-related accounts.

B. Representation and Communication

1. Users representing the district must clearly identify affiliation by including:
 - The district name and/or logo, authorized by the communications officer.
 - The school name and/or logo, authorized by the principal.
2. Staff and students must conduct their social media use in accordance with professional and appropriate standards, and all District policies.
3. Only district-authorized accounts may issue official communications during emergencies or crises.
4. Staff should not respond to online rumors or misinformation; they should refer concerns to the Communications Office.

C. Privacy, Respect, and Confidentiality

1. Users must not disclose confidential student, staff, or district information without written consent.
2. Media consent forms must be obtained before sharing student names, images, or work as per Regulation 1360 – Waivers and Informed Consent.
3. Content must be respectful, non-exploitative, and consistent with the **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)**.
4. Users must comply with FOIPPA amendments (2021/22) related to data storage and use of non-Canadian servers.
5. Cyberbullying, harassment, or defamation will not be tolerated as per Regulation 1080 – District and School Student Codes of Conduct.
6. Staff who experience online harassment should report it to their supervisor; the district will provide appropriate support.
7. Official information shared on social media must also be available through alternate communication methods to ensure equitable access.

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D. Staff–Student Online Interaction

1. Communication between staff and students through social media must only occur on official accounts and relate directly to coursework, school clubs, or approved extra activities.
2. Staff must not initiate or accept “friend” or “follow” requests from students except through structured, supervised platforms.
3. One-on-one private messaging with students through personal social media is prohibited; communication should occur through district-approved tools (e.g., Microsoft Teams or whenever possible in spaces visible to parents/guardians or other staff members).
4. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to messages outside of regular working hours.
5. Personal advocacy or political expression is not permitted on any official accounts.
6. Refer to professional standards for all accounts, including personal accounts.
(https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teacher-regulation/standards-for-educators/edu_standards.pdf)
7. Even in pre-existing social connections with the student (or with the family), staff must maintain professional tone and boundaries. There should be no private or spontaneous exchanges unrelated to instruction or school business.

E. Monitoring, Reporting, and Review

1. The district communications officer will review official district-related accounts, including official school accounts, annually to ensure compliance.
2. Principals will review school-related accounts annually to ensure compliance.
3. The regulation will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier in response to major technological or legislative changes.
4. Violations may result in corrective actions including retraining, account removal, or disciplinary measures in accordance with district policies.

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References:

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA):
https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96165_00
- BC Teacher Standards (BC Teachers’ Council):
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teacher-regulation/standards-for-educators/edu_standards.pdf

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- Regulation 1080: District and School Student Codes of Conduct: <https://sd46.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/1080-District-and-School-Student-Codes-of-Conduct.pdf>
- WorkSafeBC Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/bullying-harassment>
- Regulation 1360: Waivers and Informed Consent: <https://sd46.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/1360-Waivers-and-Informed-Consent-.pdf>