

**Social Media For Students**

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of social media for its students, and acknowledges that its students have the right under the First Amendment, in certain circumstances, to speak out on matters of public concern. In accordance with the provisions of the First Amendment, the Board will regulate the use of social media by students, including students' personal use of social media, when such use:

1. interferes, disrupts or undermines the effective operation of the school district;
2. is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications;
3. creates a hostile work environment;
4. violates the law, board policies and/or other school rules and regulations.

**I. Definitions:**

**Social media** includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and MySpace.

**Board of Education** includes all names, logos, buildings, images and entities under the authority of the Board of Education.

**II. Rules Concerning Personal Social Media Activity**

1. Students are required to maintain appropriate personal and educational boundaries with teachers, administrators, and colleagues. For example, on the student's personal Facebook, absent an unrelated online relationship (e.g., relative, family friend, or personal friendship unrelated to school), it is not appropriate for a student to "friend" a teacher or administrator or otherwise establish special relationships with selected teacher or administrator through personal social media, and it is not appropriate for a student to give teachers or administrators access to personal postings unrelated to school.
2. Unless given written consent, students may not use the Board of Education's logo or trademarks on their personal posts. Please note that this prohibition extends to the use of logos or trademarks associated with individual schools, programs or teams of the school district.
3. Students must refrain from engaging in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications through personal social media. Such communications can affect the educational process.

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**II. Rules Concerning Personal Social Media Activity (continued)**

4. Students are individually responsible for their personal communications through social media. Students may be sued by other students, parents, teachers, administrators or others, or any individual that views a student's communication through social media as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile environment. As such activities are outside the scope of school, students may be personally liable for such claims.
5. Students are required to comply with all Board of Education policies and procedures with respect to the use of district computer equipment, networks or electronic devices when accessing social media sites.
6. The Board of Education reserves the right to monitor all student use of district computers and other electronic devices, including student blogging and social networking activity. A student should have no expectation of personal privacy in any personal communication made through social media while using district computers, cellular telephones or other electronic data devices.
7. A student may not link a social media page to the Board of Education's website or the websites of individual schools, programs or teams; or post Board of Education material on a social media site or webpage without written permission of the superintendent.
8. All Board of Education policies that regulate after school conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment and school code of conduct.

**III. Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity**

1. In order for a student to use social media sites as an educational tool or in relation to extracurricular activities or programs of the school district, the student must seek and obtain the permission of his/her supervising teacher or administrator.
2. The district will not be liable for information/comments posted by students on social media websites when the student is not engaged in district activities and not using district equipment.
3. Students are required to refrain from making harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate statements in their social media communications on district-sponsored sites.
4. Students are required to comply with all Board of Education policies and procedures and all applicable laws with respect to the use of computer equipment, networks or devices when accessing district-sponsored social media sites.

**INSTRUCTION**

**6141.326a**

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**III. Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity (continued)**

5. The Board of Education reserves the right to monitor all student use of district computers and other electronic devices, including student blogging and social networking activity. A student should have no expectation of personal privacy in any communication made through social media while using district computers, cellular telephones or other data devices.
6. All communications through district-sponsored social media must comply with the Board of Education's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If a student is considering sharing information and is unsure about the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with his/her teacher/administrator prior to communicating such information.
7. A student may not link a district-sponsored social media page to any personal social media sites or sites not sponsored by the school district.
8. A student may not use district-sponsored social media communications for private financial gain, political, commercial, advertisement, proselytizing or solicitation purposes.
9. A student may not use district-sponsored social media communications in a manner that misrepresents personal views as those of the Board of Education, individual school or school district, or in a manner that could be construed as such.

**IV. Disciplinary Consequences**

Violation of the Board's policy concerning the use of social media or these administrative regulations may lead to discipline up to and including expulsion consistent with state and federal law.

Legal References: U.S. Constitution, Amend. I  
Conn. Constitution, Article I, Sections 3, 4, 14  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-51q  
Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-182; 53a-183; 53a-250  
Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520

**Regulation Approved: 01/22/13**