

## **Community Relations**

### **District-Sponsored Social Media**

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes the value of technology such as social media platforms in promoting community involvement and collaboration. The purpose of any official District social media platform shall be to further the District's vision and mission, support student learning and staff professional development, and enhance communication with students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop content guidelines and protocols for official District social media platforms to ensure the appropriate and responsible use of these resources and compliance with law, Board policy, and regulation.

### **Guidelines for Content**

Official District social media platforms shall be used only for their stated purposes and in a manner consistent with this policy and administrative regulation. By creating these official sites, the Board does not intend to create a limited public forum or otherwise guarantee an individual's right to free speech.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the limited purpose of the official District social media platforms is clearly communicated to users. Each site shall contain a statement that specifies the site's purposes along with a statement that users are expected to use the site only for those purposes. Each site shall also contain a statement that users are personally responsible for the content of their posts.

Official District social media platforms may not contain content that is obscene, libelous, profane, intended to harass, intimidate, bully, threaten, or so incites students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on school premises, violation of school rules, or substantial disruption of the school's orderly operation.

Staff or students who post prohibited content shall be subject to discipline in accordance with District policies and administrative regulations.

Users of official District social media platforms should be aware of the public nature and accessibility of social media and that information posted may be considered a public record subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The Board expects users to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner.

### **Privacy**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the privacy rights of students, parents/guardians, staff, Board members, and other employees are protected on official District social media platforms.

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#### Privacy (continued)

Board policy pertaining to the posting of student photographs and protection of the privacy of telephone numbers, home addresses, and email addresses, as specified in other applicable Board policies shall also apply to official District social media platforms.

Social media and networking sites and other online platforms shall not be used by District employees to transmit confidential information about students, employees, or District operations.

- (cf. 1100 - Communications with the Public)
- (cf. 1110.1 - Parent Involvement)
- (cf. 1112 - News Media Relationships)
- (cf. 4118.5/4218.5 - Staff Acceptable Computer Use)
- (cf. 4118.51/4218.51 - Social Networking)
- (cf. 5114 - Suspension/Expulsion; Due Process)
- (cf. 5125 - Student Records)
- (cf. 5131 - Conduct)
- (cf. 5131.911 - Bullying)
- (cf. 5131.913 - Cyberbullying)
- (cf. 5142.2 - Freedom of Expression)
- (cf. 5144 - Discipline)
- (cf. 6141.321 - Acceptable Computer Use)
- (cf. 6141.323 - Filtering Access to Electronic Networks)
- (cf. 6141.324 - Posting of Student Work/Photographs)
- (cf. 6141.326 - Online Social Networking)
- (cf. 6145.5 - Student Organization and Equal Access)
- (cf. 9327 - Electronic Mail Communications)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

1-19(b)(11) Access to public records. Exempt records.

10-15b Access of parent or guardians to student's records.

10-209 Records not to be public.

11-8a Retention, destruction and transfer of documents.

11-8b Transfer or disposal of public records. State Liberty Board to adopt regulations.

46b-56(e) Access to Records of Minors.

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)

Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended, added by section 513 of PL 93-568, codified at 20 U.S.C. 1232g.).

Dept. of Education. 34 CFR. Part 99 (May 9, 1980 45 FR 30802) regs. implementing FERPA enacted as part of 438 of General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) - parent and student privacy and other rights with respect to educational records, as amended 11/21/96.

Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (HR 4577, P.L. 106-554)

Communications Act of 1934, as amended (47 U.S.C. 254[h],[I])

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6801 et seq., Part F)

Public Law 94-553, The Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C. 101 et. se q.

*Reno v. ACLU*, 521 U.S. 844 (1997)

*Ginsberg v. New York*, 390 U.S. 629, at 642, n.10 (1968)

*Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 868 (1988)

*Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 620, 267 (1988)

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EAST GRANBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
East Granby, Connecticut

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### District-Sponsored Social Media

#### Definitions

**Social media** means any online platform for collaboration, interaction, and active participation, including, but not limited to, social networking sites such as Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, or blogs.

**Note:** *To minimize liability to the district, the district will clearly define the official social media platforms over which it has control and to specify the standards, guidelines, and protocols for their use*

**Official District social media platform** is a site authorized by the Superintendent or designee. Sites that have not been authorized by the Superintendent or designee but that contain content related to the District or comments on District operations, such as a site created by a parent-teacher organization, booster club, or other school-connected organization or a student's or employee's personal site, are not considered official District social media platforms.

#### Authorization for Official District Social Media Platforms

The Superintendent or designee shall authorize the development of any official District social media platform. Teachers and coaches shall obtain approval from the Principal before creating an official classroom or team social media platform.

#### Guidelines for Content

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that official District social media platforms provide current information regarding District programs, activities, and operations, consistent with the goals and purpose of this policy and regulation. Official District social media platforms shall contain content that is appropriate for all audiences.

**Note:** *Federal copyright law (17 USC 107) and the courts have generally provided that teachers, students, and schools are allowed to make "fair use" of materials for instructional purposes in situations which are not likely to deprive a publisher or an author of income. Unless there is a clear statement that text, art, or photos are in the "public domain" and available for free use, such material should not be replicated without prior permission of the owner of the copyright.*

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### District-Sponsored Social Media (continued)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that copyright laws are not violated in the use of material on official District social media platform.

*In order to protect against possible constitutional challenges, any removal of content by the District should be based on viewpoint-neutral considerations, such as preventing the violation of laws against discrimination or harassment or the posting of materials that are unrelated to the purpose of the site. The District will consult legal counsel to ensure that its guidelines for removal of posts are consistent with law. Also see the accompanying Board policy.*

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that official District social media platforms are regularly monitored. Staff members responsible for monitoring content may remove posts based on viewpoint-neutral considerations, such as lack of relation to the site's purpose or violation of the District's policy, regulation, or content guidelines.

Each official District social media platform shall prominently display:

1. The purpose of the site along with a statement that users are expected to use the site only for those intended purposes.
2. Information on how to gain permission to use the security settings of the social media platform.
3. A statement that the site is regularly monitored and that any inappropriate post will be promptly removed. Inappropriate posts include those that:
  - a. Are obscene, libelous, profane, intended to harass, intimidate, bully, threaten, or so incite students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on school premises, violation of school rules, or substantial disruption of the schools' orderly operation.
  - b. Are not related to the stated purpose of the site, including, but not limited to, comments of a commercial nature, political activity and comments that constitute discrimination or harassment.
4. Protocols for users, including expectations that users will communicate in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner.

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### District-Sponsored Social Media (continued)

5. A statement that users are personally responsible for the content of their posts and that the District is not responsible for the content of external online platforms.
6. A disclaimer that the views and comments expressed on the site are those of the users and do not necessarily reflect the views of the District.
7. No post will infer endorsement of a specific commercial product or service does not imply endorsement or recommendation of that product or service by the District.
8. The individual(s) to contact regarding violation of District guidelines on the use of official District social media platforms.

District employees who participate in official District social media platforms shall adhere to all applicable District policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, state laws, professional standards related to interactions with students.

Employees using official District social media platforms shall identify themselves by name and District title and shall not post any statement that tarnishes the reputation of the school district, its students or employees.

All staff shall receive information about appropriate use of the official District social media platforms.