Vancouver Island West School District 84

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

AP 142

Adopted 2026-09-14

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

The Vancouver Island West School District recognizes that social media can be a valuable communication tool that allows staff to promote school and District events and activities within the community. When using social media all staff have a responsibility to protect the privacy of students, and to maintain professional boundaries, and model respectful conduct in communications with students, families, and the community.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that social media usage by employees is consistent with the following expectations:

- community and public confidence in the District and its employees; employees;
- the provision of a safe, healthy, and discrimination-free working and learning environments for students and employees;
- ensuring compliance with District policies, administrative procedures, standards of professional conduct, and professional boundaries; and,
- the District's compliance with privacy legislation and all other applicable laws;
- Provide staff with clear expectations regarding the appropriate, ethical, and responsible use of social media in both their professional and personal roles where such use may affect the District or the employment relationship

This Administrative Procedure sets out the social media guidelines that are consistent with the District's mission, values and expectations and its legal obligations under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Definitions

Personal social media account - A social media account that is created, maintained, and used by an employee in their personal capacity for non-work purposes. The account is not authorized, managed, monitored, or sponsored by the District or a school, and the employee retains sole responsibility for its content and administration

School/district social media account - A social media account that is created or authorized by the District or a school for official educational, operational, or communication purposes. The account is owned by the District, is subject to District policies and procedures, and is managed, monitored, and maintained by authorized employees or representatives on behalf of the District or school.

Procedure

This administrative procedure sets out the expected separation for the use of personal and school district social media accounts and the standards of conduct for staff in their use of social media.

1. Social Media Account Usage
   1.1 All staff communications using social media with students, parents/guardians, school district partners, or the broader school district community will take place using school/district social media accounts.
   1.2 Staff may create a school/district social media account by obtaining approval from their principal or direct supervisor. The principal or supervisor will notify the Assistant Superintendent of any approved school/district social media accounts;
   1.3 School/district social media accounts created for or by school clubs and/or extracurricular activities are the responsibility of the sponsor teacher under the supervision of the Principal, including account creation, access, and content;
   1.4 Communications and content on school/school district social media accounts must comply with this procedure and will be subject to monitoring by the school district. The school district reserves the right to remove any posts or content that are inappropriate or in violation of this procedure;
   1.5 Staff may use their personal social media accounts to follow, re-share, "like," or comment on posts from school/school district accounts or those of community partners but must maintain their fiduciary responsibility to the employer.

2. Staff Responsibility
   2.1 Staff are responsible for the content and information they post or share on social media, whether it is posted under a personal social media account or a school district social media account, and whether under their own name, an alias, or anonymously;
   2.2 Staff are expected to exercise good judgment and uphold the purpose of this administrative procedure (above) in their use of social media;
   2.3 Online communications are subject to the same standards of conduct as other work-related communications. Staff are expected to maintain appropriate, professional, and respectful practices in their social media communications, including maintaining professional boundaries with students, staff, and parents/guardians and members of the community;

2.4 Staff may not post or transmit personal and/or confidential information related to staff or students using social media accounts.
2.5 Staff who become aware of social media activity that my place a student or staff at risk are expected to report the matter to the police, social services, and/or their supervisor as appropriate (see AP 325 Child Abuse).

3. Online Correspondence
   3.1 Staff should communicate with students and parents/guardians about a student's progress using direct, confidential, and secure methods (e.g., school district email, written correspondence, MS Teams, video, or audio calls);
   3.2 Online correspondence between staff and students should be limited to communication related to course work or school-sanctioned clubs/activities and should use only approved school district digital channels (e.g., MS Teams, school district email);
   3.3 Online correspondence between staff and parents/guardians must be conducted through approved school district digital channels;
   3.4 Staff must not initiate or accept electronic "friend" invitations from students on personal social media accounts. Communication with students on social media must be professional in nature and conducted through approved district channels (i.e. MS Teams, district email, school/district social media account)

4. Privacy and Consent
   4.1 School District staff are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which governs all collection, use, and disclosure of personal information, including information shared via social media. Managers, supervisors, and principals are responsible for ensuring staff understand their obligations under this legislation (see AP 131 – Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy).
   4.2 Before posting pictures, recordings, or other personal information on social media, staff must ensure they have written consent (e.g., media consent form on file at the school) from affected individuals;
   4.3 Schools are expected to maintain written consent on file from students (or their parents/guardians for those under 13) for the use and publication of personal information via social media. Such consent is optional and may be withdrawn. Staff must verify consent before posting any personal information (including images) of students or staff;
   4.4 Staff may not publish sensitive student personal information on social media, even with consent. This includes any information that could expose students to embarrassment, risk, or harm, such as mental health or medical data, special needs, contact details, or disciplinary history.

5. Considerations for Personal Social Media Use
   5.1 Content shared by staff on personal social media may be interpreted as representing the school district and could impact their professional responsibilities. Staff should thoughtfully consider the impact of their personal social media activity.
   5.2 Staff are expected to follow these guidelines with personal social media:
      i) Model an appropriate online presence that maintains public confidence in the school district;
      ii) Use privacy settings to protect personal communications or sensitive content;
      iii) Refrain from bullying, harassing, intimidating, defaming, or discriminating against students, parents/guardians, colleagues, or others in the school district community;
      iv) Avoid posting content that identifies students without proper consent and as permitted by this procedure;
      v) Do not disclose confidential school or school district information;
      vi) Be accurate when publishing information about the school district and correct any errors promptly;
      vii) Use school/school district accounts for work-related posts and personal accounts for personal content;
      viii) Consult their principal or supervisor if unsure about the appropriateness of social media use;
      ix) Ensure that any professional content complies with copyright and fair use laws, including proper attribution and avoiding plagiarism.

6. Annual Review
   6.1 School principals and supervisors will review this procedure with their staff on an annual basis.