



Administrative Directive 8.60.044-AD

Social Media Use and Expectations for Staff

Portland Public Schools (PPS) recognizes the importance of social media as a tool to engage, collaborate, learn, and share in a modern learning environment.

Protecting student safety by establishing guidelines for staff online communication allows for use of social media to further the educational mission of PPS schools. Staff may participate in social media, but are expected to maintain appropriate boundaries with students, families, community, and staff that are conducive to a safe learning environment and professional relationships.

I. Social Media

Social media includes many types of electronic communication where user-created content is shared collaboratively in an online environment where those users share opinions, knowledge, and information with each other. Some examples of social media tools are:

- Blogs (e.g., Blogger, Wordpress, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing sites (e.g., Google Photos, Hangouts, Instagram, SnapChat, Vimeo, YouTube, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking sites (e.g., Pinterest, Reddit, etc.)
- Social Networking sites (e.g., Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Chatrooms – online tools that groups of people use for real-time conversations via messages. (e.g., Hangouts Chat, WhatsApp, iMessage, Facebook Messenger)
- Forums – online sites to which users post comments or opinions on topics and can respond to posts. (e.g., news sites, Twitter, etc.)
- Text messages – Communication using a user’s cellular account messaging app



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District software tools such as Google Classroom, Canvas, TeacherVUE Gradebook, Blackboard Web Community Manager also incorporate social media functionality to support collaboration and should be considered within this administrative directive.

Staff must maintain separate accounts for professional versus personal social media use and may only follow or accept requests to connect from current students, non-adult former students, or their families through their professional social media presence established consistent with the requirements set forth in this administrative directive.

All professional communications must be through PPS provided email or District-approved platforms using the staff PPS account, as described in the District's Acceptable Use Policy (8.60.40-P). Staff may only communicate with current students or their families through social media direct or private messaging tools with prior District approval and parent notification. Likewise, when communicating for professional purposes with other staff members or community members, staff must use PPS provided email or District-approved platforms. .

Staff shall not communicate with students or staff, for any reason, through use of a medium that is designed to eliminate all traces or records of the communication (e.g., Snapchat).

Staff should have no expectation of privacy when communicating to students, families, and other staff members on a social media platform. All staff communication using a District tool or device, including text messaging on a District cell phone, is subject to public records requests.

Always keep in mind that material such as comments and pictures that are shared or posted on either personal or professional social media could impact a staff member's professional standing if those postings cause material disruption of school activities or a



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staff member's ability to perform his or her job duties, or otherwise violate district policies. Staff activities on either personal or professional social media while on or off duty, which PPS reasonably believes are disruptive to the school environment, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Remember that all staff are mandatory child abuse reporters under ORS 419B.005-ORS 419B.045 and PPS Administrative Directive 4.50.050-AD. Any content viewed on social media that would otherwise require reporting under those statutes must be reported in accordance with state law.

The taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing of illegal images or photographs (such as obscene or pornographic images), whether by electronic transfer or other method (such as texting, sexting, and emailing) may constitute a crime under state and/or federal law. Staff taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing illegal images or photographs will be reported to law enforcement and/or other state or federal agencies.

II. Professional Social Media Use

PPS supports the use of social media to facilitate classroom collaboration and build more successful parent, community, student, and staff engagement. PPS professional social media presence is considered an extension of the PPS information network and must comply with all applicable laws, and district policies and guidelines, including the district's Acceptable Use Policy (8.60.40). PPS policies and guidelines that cover staff conduct on school grounds or in school-related activities also apply to participation in PPS professional social media. These policies include but are not limited to:



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X.XX.XXX Professional Conduct between Staff and Students

1.80-020-P Non-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment

4.30.060-P Anti-Harassment

6.10.045-P Communication with Parents/Guardians, Interpretation and Translation Services

8.60.041-AD Acceptable Use of District Technology

8.60.43-AD District Web Site

Instructional staff who wish to use social media to collaborate with students or have students collaborate with each other are encouraged to use district-provided collaboration tools such as Google GSuite for Education, etc. Staff choosing, in their professional capacity, to create social media presences for the purpose of communicating and collaborating with students or families about classroom activities must:

- Use their PPS provided account name to register.
- Notify the building administrator or their supervisor in writing and provide them access to the professional site.
- Be maintained directly by them. Student teachers, classroom assistants, parents, community members, etc., may not be given administrative rights to view or post as the staff.
- Refrain from posting content that involves the following:
 - Confidential information or information that violates the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or other privacy laws,
 - Bullying or threatening comments about or related to anyone,
 - Illegal or defamatory material,
 - Material that violates copyright or intellectual property laws, or



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- Material that violates district policies relating to discrimination and harassment.
- Provide written notice to families and grant access if requested.
- Prior to posting photos, student work, etc., verify proper consent has been provided on the student registration or verification form.
- Regularly monitor the site to address, and remove, behavior and activity that violates district policy. Remember that social media in the classroom is an extension of your physical classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- Report incidents of student misconduct appropriately.

Supervisors are responsible to:

- Investigate reported incidents of staff and student misconduct on social media.
- Respond to and report misconduct appropriately.

Schools and Departments that create a social media presence must:

- Use their PPS provide email address to register.
- Notify their Senior Director and the Communications Department in writing.
- Be maintained by a PPS staff. Parents, community members, and other non-PPS individuals may not be given administrative rights to view or post as the school or department.
- Refrain from posting content that is confidential or in violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), bullying or threatening comments about or related to anyone, illegal material, or material that violates copyright or intellectual property laws or district policies relating to discrimination and harassment.



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- Regularly monitor the site to address, remove, and respond to, behavior and activity that violates district policy.

III. Personal Social Media Use

Staff who create a personal social media presence:

- May not “friend” or “follow” current students, non-adult former students, through their personal social media presence. Instead, they should request the individual connect with them through their professional social media presence.
- May not use their PPS-provided email address to register.
- May not post photographs or writing of PPS-students or staff without the express written consent of each individual or their guardian.
- Should consider personal thoughts that are expressed may be misunderstood as expressing an official PPS position.
- Should consider off-campus online communications may be connected enough to campus to result in staff discipline.

There may be circumstances where there is an appropriate personal relationship between staff and other staff members or between staff and a student’s family that exists independently of their position with PPS (e.g. where their children are friends).

This Administrative Directive is not intended to limit personal social media activities that are appropriate and consistent with such relationship.

History: Approved 5/19