

MANCHESTER CITY SCHOOLS

Policy Manual

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The Manchester City School District respects the right of employees to use social media and networking sites, as well as personal websites, wikis, online forums, virtual worlds, video-sharing websites, and blogs, but it is important that employees' personal use of these sites does not damage the reputation of the District, its employees, its students or their families. Social media and networking sites must not be accessed through the District network at anytime. Personal usage of social media sites using personal technology which does not use the District network is limited to duty-free breaks and lunch hours.

Employees should exercise care in setting appropriate boundaries between their personal and public online behavior, understanding that what is private in the digital world often has the possibility of becoming public, even without their knowledge or consent. Employees are responsible of content on their social media sites, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends or members of the public who can access the employee's site, and for Web links on the employee's site. Employees shall take reasonable precautions, such as using available security settings, to restrict students from viewing their personal information on social media websites and to prevent students from accessing material that are not age-appropriate. The District strongly encourages all employees to carefully review the privacy settings on any social media and networking sites they use and exercise care and good judgment when posting content and information on such sites.

If an employee maintains or participates in a District sponsored online community that extends to persons who are parents, alumni, or other constituents, s/he must exercise good judgment about any content that is shared on the site.

POSTING TO SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Employees who use social media for personal purposes must be aware that the content they post may be viewed by anyone, including students, parents and community members. Employees should adhere to the following guidelines, which are consistent with professional communication and confidentiality:

- An employee shall not make statements that would violate any District policies, including its policies concerning discrimination, bullying, harassment, or obscene material;
- The employee shall uphold District value of respect for the individual and avoid making defamatory statements about District, schools, employees, students, or a student's family;
- An employee will not disclose any confidential information of the District or school or confidential information obtained during the course of his/her employment about any individuals or organizations, including students and/or their families.
- An employee is strongly discouraged from including current, minor students as "friends," "followers," or any other similar terminology used by various sites unless the employee and student have a family relationship or without written permission from the student's parent.
- Employees shall not knowingly allow students access to their personal social networking sites that discuss or portray sex, nudity, alcohol or drug use or other behaviors associated with the employees' private lives that would be inappropriate to discuss with a student at school.
- Employees may not knowingly grant students access to any portions of their personal social networking sites that are not accessible to the general public, unless the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.
- Employees shall not use the District's logo or other copyrighted material of the District without the express, written consent from the Manchester Board of Education.
- Employees shall not post identifiable images of a student or student's family without permission from the student and the student's parent or legal guardian.
- Employees shall not use Internet postings to libel or defame the Board, individual Board members, students or other school employees.

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Employees will be held to the same professional standards in the public use of social media and other electronic communications as they are for any other public conduct. Further, school employees remain subject to applicable state and federal laws, Board policies, and administrative procedures, even if communication with others concerning personal and private matters. If the District believes that an employee’s activity on a social networking site, blog, or personal website may violate Manchester Board of Education policies or administrative procedures, the District may request that the employee cease such activity. If an employee’s does not cease the activity and/or if use of social media interferes with the employee’s ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The Director of Schools/designee may periodically conduct public Internet searches to determine if an employee has engaged in conduct that violates this policy.

Legal References

Cross References:

4.406 – Use of the Internet