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Social Media Policy**Information Environment**

This hypothetical information environment is a public elementary school library. The library serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade, teachers and other staff at the school. The school library housed within a public elementary school currently operates without a social media policy from the library or school. As this library is within a public-school district, the next logical entity to have a social media policy is the district. The school district also does not have a social media policy, though a Technology Responsible Use Policy is utilized. At the district level, Facebook and Twitter are utilized for communication about district events. The school library maintains a website accessible from the school's website and uses YouTube to support student learning.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a foundation for using social media in connection with the school library. Social media broadly defines any online platform in which users may connect directly. The library recognizes numerous benefits and opportunities presented through social media, however some risks are associated with social media use. This policy encourages safe use of social media by the library staff, students, and caregivers.

Scope

This policy supports existing school and district policies and applies to all staff, students and caregivers associated with the school and district. This policy applies to all online communications posted at any time and from anywhere which relate to the school library both directly and indirectly. Safe and responsible use of social media are encouraged through training and education, beginning with this policy. Accounts maintained by the school library are subject to monitoring and therefore are applicable to this policy as professional communications. Personal accounts and communications unrelated to the school library are outside the scope of this policy.

Responsibilities*Library Staff*

- Facilitate student and caregiver education sessions for safe and responsible social media use.

- Maintain school library social media platforms for the purpose of communicating relevant information about the library to the community.
- Maintain professionalism in all social media communications.
- Utilize caution and common sense when adding content to social media platforms. All personal privacy and confidentiality must be maintained.
- Obtain permission prior to publishing names, photos or videos of students.
- All content published on social media platforms is subject to copyright and fair use laws.
- Assume all content is public and publish accordingly.
- Monitor school library social media platforms to follow existing school and district policies regarding inappropriate content.

Students

- Attend social media education sessions as provided by library staff.
- Engage in responsible, safe social media use.
- Ensure the positive learning environment of the school library is maintained to social media platforms.
- Maintain privacy of others by obtaining permission to publish photos and videos.
- Assume that all content published on any social media is public and as such, take into consideration the consequences of your contributions.
- All content published on social media platforms is subject to copyright and fair use laws.
- Report any inappropriate content.
- Any inappropriate content posted to or in connection with the school library social media platforms will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with school and district behavior policies, in addition to local and state laws.

Caregivers

- Attend social media education sessions as provided by library staff.
- Engage in responsible, safe social media use which provides a positive example to students.
- Maintain privacy of others by obtaining permission to publish photos and videos.
- All content published on social media platforms is subject to copyright and fair use laws.
- Any inappropriate content posted to or in connection with the school library social media platforms will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with school and district behavior policies, in addition to local and state laws.
- Elect to allow or not allow permission for their student to use social media platforms.
- Elect to have their child's name or picture published on the school library social media platforms.

Comparable Social Media Policies

The five social media policies reviewed are created by public school districts across the United States. The creators are [Jackson Public Schools](#) in Michigan, [Madison Metropolitan School District](#) in Wisconsin, [Pottsville Area School District](#) in Pennsylvania, [Los Angeles Unified School District](#) in California, and [Sunnyside School District](#) in Washington. These policies all include a purpose of the policy and similar statements about privacy and professional communication between employees and students. Jackson Public Schools, Madison Metropolitan School District, Pottsville Area School District, and Los Angeles Unified School District also each include a section that defines terms related to social media though no consistency in terms exists across all four of these policies.

The Los Angeles Unified School District policy is directed toward student use of social media while the other four policies are for employee social media use.

Social Media Terms Defined

District	Terms Defined
Jackson Public Schools	Social Media Account, Social Media Channels, Professional Social Media, Social Media Disclosures, Controversial Issues, Inbound Links, Hosted Content, Copyrights, Official Content, Blog, Microblogging, Cyberbully
Madison Metropolitan School District	Social Network, Microblog, Listserv / Newsgroup, Forum, Chatroom, Text Message
Pottsville Area School District	Guests, Social Media, Blogs, Microblogs, Social Networks, Media Sharing, Wikis, Virtual Worlds
Los Angeles Unified School District	Apps, Associated Persons, Blogs, Confidential Data, Cloud Computing, Digital Citizenship, Digital Footprint, Media Sharing Sites, Microblogs, Social Media / Social Networking, Tagging, Wikis
Sunnyside School District	No terms defined

Key Points of Jackson Public Schools

- The clear purpose defines the policy as the framework which facilitates timely information communication.
- Scope of the policy includes all individuals associated with Jackson Public Schools and the various social media and media platforms.
- Specific guidelines for faculty and staff, reminding staff to maintain professionalism online as they do in face-to-face interactions and obtain permission before publishing photos or videos.
- Highlighted in red, are very clear specifications that employees are not to connect with students on any Social Media platform, employees may not encourage students to create accounts, and social media accounts created for classroom information must only contain classroom and school content.
- Cyberbullying section, beginning with a definition and concluding with a zero-tolerance statement. All individuals are expected to report cyberbullying to the school principal immediately, with the appropriate policies and laws governing procedure after the report.
- Steps for communicating with the media are provided, specifying that all media reporters are to be referred to the school principal while maintaining professionalism.
- The section, Dangers of Student Sexting, details consequences of sexting and encourages adults (inferred parents/guardians) to discuss these consequences with their student.
- Contact information for each school administrator is provided at the end of the policy.

Key Points of Madison Metropolitan School District

- Policy built around maintaining effective communication through social media and digital devices.
- Purpose is defined as a guide for staff use and ramifications of communication tools.
- A list of Board of Education Policies is provided for quick reference as related to the Social Media Guidelines.
- In the section titled "District-supported vs. personal media" the guidelines specify user responsibilities including following rules established by the social media provider and being mindful of how personal information can become public even if not initially intended. Additionally, this section encourages staff to keep personal and professional communications separate.
- Social media is permitted for classroom use provided a clear communication regarding the purpose occurs with families and school administration. Further, common sense and professional judgement are cited for communication with between students and staff.
- Professional conduct is clearly specified and expected of all employees, including using caution when posting on the internet as disciplinary action may result.

Key Points of Pottsville Area School District

- Begins with clearly defined purpose of creating rules for users (students, employees, guests) to follow.
- Examples of websites, platforms, resources, and documents used for educational purposes are Google Apps, Ning, Teacher Tube, Moodle, and Gaggle
- Users are responsible for their own communications, with no expected privacy as other users in private settings may publicize, in addition to the school district having the right to access content.
- Consequences of inappropriate, unauthorized or illegal use are included in this policy. Loss of access, suspension, or legal proceedings are example consequences listed.
- A separate, simplified student version of the policy is provided with an acknowledgment and consent attached for students and parents to sign.

Key Points of Los Angeles Unified School District

- Designed for students as a guide for using social media.
- Additional purposes of this policy are to prevent unauthorized access or unlawful student activities online, prevent sensitive information disclosure or unauthorized access, and comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act.
- Simply stated is the positive impact appropriate social media use can have on student learning when awareness and education are provided for students to become critical consumers and creators of online material.
- Internet safety education is required of all students with access to the Internet. This education enables responsible and productive participation online while establishing a positive digital footprint.
- Specification that electronic devices provided to students from the school are for educational purposes, and that authorization permits the district to access social media activity on provided devices and the district network.
- Students are expected to follow the code of conduct in all interactions.

- Social media provides an illusion of privacy, and students lose control of the content posted.
- Students are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others, exercising good judgement when photographing or video and audio recording. Any images or videos of students at school or school events must have parental permission to be posted online, with specific notification to parents if material is posted on a school-sponsored platform.
- Students are also expected to honestly and ethically represent themselves online, be aware of staff responsibility to report possible abuse, access age appropriate content, avoid unlawful activity, responsibly help create a safe physical and virtual school environment, and present their own creations while giving credit to original authors as copyright dictates.
- Administration has the responsibility to distribute the policy to employees, investigate misconduct incidents as reported, report to additional agencies as needed for inappropriate posts, document evidence of inappropriate content with permission of site administrators for investigative purposes only, use iSTAR to document critical incidents, and ensure inappropriate behavior ceases through monitoring.
- Staff are expected to model and instruct appropriate online behavior, discuss the entire social media policy before utilizing social media for instruction, monitor platforms of use for instruction, encourage students to report violations, and report complaints and incidents to social media site administrators as applicable.
- Superintendents and Central Office staff also have the responsibility to communicate and support the policy is implemented and aligned with related initiatives of the school district.
- Specific steps are listed as the "General Protocol" procedures for responding to complaints.
- Additional policies are provided as related resources.
- A list of offices is provided for any individual seeking additional assistance or information. This list provides the office name and phone number for specific assistance or guidance areas.

Key Points of Sunnyside School District

- Cover page which recognizes the importance of participating in digital environments, states how the guidelines complement existing policies, and encourages users to carefully read the full document before engaging in online activity as this document acts as a user agreement to follow the policy through online activity.
- This policy focuses on employee use of social media and is split into two sections – accounts related to school and personal accounts.
- For school associated accounts, the account must be registered with the Communications Department, the account and all content must adhere to state laws and the Freedom of Information Act, while maintaining high professional discretion. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate content are provided to clarify the high professional discretion.
- The guidelines for personal employee online activity include consideration of how content made available online can impact others. These guidelines also encourage users to assume all content may become public regardless of privacy settings and as such, to respect the privacy of students and colleagues.
- The final section of the policy details interactions between employees and students.
- Student privacy is to be maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, while ensuring that photographs and names of students are posted with permission.
- Boundaries are established in an additional policy and referenced from this social media policy. According to the social media policy, employees are not ever obliged to connect personal accounts with students or the school district.
- Communication with students is expected to be educational, professional, in compliance with all laws, policies, and professional standards, and transparent.

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