

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: 300 Employees

TITLE: Staff Use of Social
Media and Electronic

Communications

ADOPTED: November 16,
2017

REVISED:

316 STAFF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Purpose

The District acknowledges that staff members' use of social media and electronic communications can be a powerful way to stay informed, connect, and share valuable resources and information, but can also offer another avenue for impropriety. To ensure that the educational environment is safe and conducive to learning, the School Reform Commission has set forth this policy articulating its expectations for staff members using social media and electronic communications.

Definitions

Social Media - any web-based and/or digital technologies that support interactive communication between organizations, communities, or individuals that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Messenger, LinkedIn, Google+, Vimeo, Pinterest, Flickr, WhatsApp, Tumblr, and Reddit.

Electronic Communications - any communication or interaction which occurs through electronic devices or means, including, but not limited to, computers, tablets, cellular and wireless devices, "smart phones", network capable music players, Internet appliances, and interactive web-based/Internet tools. Electronic communications ~~and interactions~~ include, but are not limited to, telephone calls, emails, text messages, social media website posts (text, video, and audio), electronic forums, private messages on social media websites, instant messages, video chats, and blogs.

Student - any individual currently enrolled in the School District of Philadelphia, including those attending alternative placements, as well as those Philadelphia residents who are homeschooled, enrolled in charter schools, attending nonpublic schools. A student is also defined as any child privately tutored by a District staff members outside the course of their employment with the District.

Staff member - all employees, student teachers, interns, residents, and volunteers of the School District of Philadelphia and any contractor or individual employed by a vendor or agency that provides services in or to the School District of Philadelphia.

Authority

School District staff is expected to conduct activities in full compliance with all District policies [1][2][3][6][7], the Employee Code of Ethics [4], and other applicable Federal, State, and local laws [5].

Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, is warranted when the conduct:

- Endangers the health, safety, or welfare of students, staff members or the general public;
- Damages the reputation and image of the School District of Philadelphia as an educational institution;
- Has a negative impact on a staff member's ability to effectively perform his/her duties;
- Results in the disclosure of sensitive, inaccurate, confidential, or otherwise non-public information; and/or
- Is a violation of law or District Policy.

Disciplinary action may be taken to address staff member conduct that takes place outside of normal working hours or away from District facilities.

Mandatory Regulatory Procedures

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall be responsible for implementing and monitoring implementation of this policy, as well as carrying out disciplinary action with regard to improper staff member use of social media and electronic communications.

The consequences for inappropriate use of social media and electronic communications will result in disciplinary action in accordance with established disciplinary procedures [1][2][3][4][6][7]; and, if the inappropriate use violates Federal, State, and/or local law [5], it will be formally reported to the proper legal authorities.

This policy is not intended to infringe on the constitutional rights of its staff members and will be applied consistent with Federal, State, and local law.

Legal References:

1. [Policy 216- Student Records](#)
2. [Policy 815 Acceptable Use of Internet, Technology, and Network Resources](#)
3. [Policy 815.1 Internet and Media Presence](#)
4. [Policy 300- Employee Code of Ethics](#)
5. [Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators](#)
6. [Policy 317 Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures](#)
7. [Policy 317.1 Educator Misconduct](#)