

SOCIAL MEDIA

Introduction

Social media are powerful communication devices that have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. Such impact can be positive and negative. However, because they tend to blur the line between personal and professional positions, Averill Park Central School District (APCSD) has adopted the following policy to avoid abuse or misuse of social media and to protect personal and professional reputations of both the individual employee and the School District, as well as protect the privacy interests of students and staff.

Social media are defined as electronic communication platforms used to disseminate information through social interaction, created by using easily accessible publishing techniques. Examples of social media include but are not limited to Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and LinkedIn. This policy applies to the use of social media in general as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

Employees need to follow the same behavioral standards online as they do in real life when utilizing social media. The same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interaction with students, fellow employees and use of School District emblems and identifying characteristics apply online just as they do elsewhere. ~~Employees can be personally liable for anything they post to a social media website.~~

POLICY FOR ALL SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Personal Social Media Accounts

Confidential and Proprietary Information

Employees must not post confidential or proprietary information about APCSD, students, employees or alumni. In addition, employees must adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to FERPA and HIPAA. Employees must further adhere to all School District privacy and confidentiality policies relating to any information they come into possession of as part of their School District employment. Employees who improperly share such confidential or proprietary information of the School District or its students and staff are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, consistent with any required due process.

Privacy does not exist in the social media world. The impact of a specific post may reflect poorly on both employees and the School District. Employees are encouraged that any posting on a personal social media site or responding to posts must be respectful as it reflects upon the employee and your employment with the School District. ~~While employees are free to express their individual opinions on any matter of social concern when doing so on personal social media, doing so respectfully is always the best choice.~~

Personal social media sites must be identified as the employee's own and not as representative of the School District, unless authorized to do so. This will avoid unnecessary confusion with those who read any social media postings and connect the author with the School District solely by virtue of an employment relationship. Employees must not use School District logos or any other School District images or iconography on any personal social media site that represents itself or appears to be an official site of the School District, unless authorized to do so in advance in writing from the School District. In addition, the School District's name shall not be used to promote a product, cause, or political party, or candidate.

~~Employees are expected to abide by the District's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) when utilizing social media sites. Violation of the AUP on a social media site could subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.~~

District Social Media Accounts

The Averill Park Central School District understands the value of its employees using social media to communicate information about school related matters such as sports and clubs. As a result, the District encourages employees of the District to develop and utilize social media accounts for the clubs, organizations, and teams that individuals have been Board of Education approved to advise, supervise, or coach. Any account that utilizes the District's name and/or logo and is managed by an employee is considered a District account and is subject to District control and oversight.

District accounts must be approved by the administrator who oversees the department to which the account is associated in advance of creating and using the account. For example, an account for an athletic team must be approved by the Director of Athletics. To that end, login information for the social media account must be given to the administrator responsible for the club, organization, or team. In addition, all such social media accounts must be utilized in an appropriate and legal manner at all times with due respect for all intended and unintended recipients of such accounts.

District social media accounts are subject to the same guidelines as any other District communication. District employees must always conduct themselves on social media accounts as they are expected to conduct themselves in the classroom or other school settings or in any other school communication. Respect and appropriate interaction with students and the public is always required.

District social media accounts should explicitly state that they are an official account for that APCSD club, organization, or team. To that end, the name and title of the individual who manages the account should be stated and the employee will use their school email account for communication.

District social media accounts should not be used to communicate information not directly related to the club, organization, or team. For example, social media accounts for teams can be used to highlight the performance of student-athletes, but cannot be used to promote religious or political beliefs, or any other personal matters.

Employees are expected to abide by the District's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) when utilizing social media sites approved by the School District. Violation of the AUP on a social media site could subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, consistent with any required due process.

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