BEST PRACTICES FOR GUIDING STAFF IN USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The best practices and guidelines set forth below apply to any user who utilizes social media pages associated with the Affton School District, its schools, departments, and/or programs.

TYPES
Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows end users to engage in multi-directional conversations in or around the content on the website. These may include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flikr, Tumblr, blogs, and wikis.

BOARD POLICY
[Affton School District Board of Education Policy GBH](#) defines expectations of Staff/Student Relations. [Affton School District Board of Educaiton Policy EHB](#) defines Acceptable Use of Technology. Please review both prior to requesting a District-related social media account.

APPROVAL
All District-related social media accounts are subject to approval. To request a Social Networking Approval Form, contact Erica Chandler, Director of Community Relations, via [e-mail](#) or by phone at x10008. Once a form is routed through the building principal and the Director of Technology & Information, you will be contacted to make an appointment to create the social media page or account.

GUIDELINES
All District-related social media accounts will need to abide by the following guidelines:
- Communication by District staff on District-related social media sites must follow all expectations defined in [Policy GBH](#).
- The Director of Community Relations will be assigned a role as dual admin and/or will follow a page or account to monitor outside activity.
    - *NOTE: Content will not be added, edited nor deleted on any District-related social media site unless it does not meet the qualifications of appropriate communication as outlined in Policy GBH and/or in the Language/Behavior guidelines below.*
- Social media is not an appropriate forum to have direct, private communication between staff and students.

LANGUAGE/BEHAVIOR
The following are considered unacceptable when using social media websites:
- Vulgar or profane language.
- Obscene, defamatory, inaccurate, or hostile posts.
- Offensive terms/phrases, or photographs that disrespect individuals or groups based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation of person.
- Threats of physical or bodily harm.
- Posting of sensitive information; including that which could compromise public safety, intellectual property, etc.
- Posting of photographs of oneself or others that can be reasonably interpreted as condoning the irresponsible use of alcohol, substance abuse, or sexual promiscuity.

August 2015

BEST PRACTICES

BE TRANSPARENT.
How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity or misrepresenting your identity. Be honest about who you are, where you work and what you do.

BE RESPECTFUL.
Affton School District is open to others voicing their opinions and contributing to relevant discussion through social media platforms. Users may complain or disagree with other posts. However, the nature of such content should at all times remain respectful. Any inappropriate, obscene, or defamatory posts will not be tolerated. Users who abuse this policy will be blocked.

BE RELEVANT.
We ask that posts remain relevant to the District and its community (students, parents, staff, alumni). Spam and other outside promotions will be removed. Members of the Affton School District community may, and are encouraged to, promote information about campus activities or accomplishments.

BE AWARE OF LIABILITY.
Individuals are legally liable for their posts on their own sites and the sites of others. Bloggers have been held liable for their comments deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene.

ALWAYS A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE.
The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. Even when you have a disclaimer or use a different user name, you will always be considered to be a district employee. Whether it is clearly communicated or not, you will be identified as working for and sometimes representing the school in what you do and say online.

BUILD COMMUNITY.
Represent the district and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about students or colleagues (including administrators) nor the district in general. Negative comments about people may amount to cyberbullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offense. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. Do not comment on or forward unsupported information (i.e., rumors). You are responsible for what you post, be certain it is accurate and supports your organization. If you are about to publish something that makes you hesitate, wait a day, review the guidelines and talk to a colleague or supervisor. Once posted you can't take it back.

SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE.
Write what you know and be accurate. Add value to the discussion. Post something useful. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. A district's most valuable asset is its staff represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on the school. Speak in the first person with your own voice and perspective.

DO NOT SHARE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.
Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information whether it is internal school discussions or specific information about students or other staff. What you post will be seen by others and will be online for a long time. It can be forwarded or shared in just a few clicks. Do not write about colleagues or students without their (or their parents') permission.

POST REGULARLY.

Don't post to your site and then not post for weeks. Readers won't have a reason to follow you if they can't expect new content regularly. Respond to other's posts. Answer questions. Make it a two-way conversation.

RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE COMMENTS AND CRITICISM.

How you respond to a negative comments or criticism will say more about you and your character than what you post. If you delete a negative post, it discourages open communication. When publicly criticized or receiving a negative comment, first, stay cool and don't reply in haste. Express your view in a clear, logical way. Don't get personal and if you made a mistake, admit it and move ahead. It is not uncommon for a negative response to be answered by some other person who supports your view. When in doubt, it's best to ignore a comment and not give it credibility by acknowledging it with a response publicly; perhaps a face-to-face meeting would be more appropriate.

COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE.

Respect copyright and fair use guidelines. Share what others have said by linking to the source and using embedded content. Be sure to cite your source when quoting. When using a hyperlink confirm that link goes where it should and that the content is appropriate.