Medicine Hat Public School Division
601-1st Avenue SW, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 4Y7 | Phone 403.528.6700 | Fax 403.529.5339 | www.mhpsd.ca

MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"

SECTION 500 – Personnel and Employee Relations

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES: DIVISION

PROCEDURE CODE:	*530 AP 004*
Policy Reference: 530 – Communications and Technology	

STAKEHOLDERS

1. Internal

   The internal stakeholders for Medicine Hat Public School Division's (MHPSD) social media guidelines are the communications coordinator, senior administration, human resources, school administration and staff.

2. External

   External stakeholders include school communities and the parents/guardians of students within the MHPSD.

OVERVIEW

This document provides the guidelines for the use of social media at the Division.

Definition

Social Media refers to a group of Internet-based applications that promote communication among participants. Social media includes blogs, wikis, and other interactive sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

PURPOSE

The Division understands students, parents/guardians and employees use technology to engage, communicate and connect with each other. As a Division, we recognize that using social media will enable our teams, schools, teachers, volunteers and parents/guardians to develop stronger relationships with key stakeholders by sharing information in a timely manner. MHPSD acknowledges the freedom of opinion, discussion and sharing of information and supports interactions that reflect the mission and vision. The Division supports staff and volunteer use of social media to interact in a knowledgeable, respectful, professional and responsible manner.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Users shall not disclose confidential or personal information as defined by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act without first obtaining consent from the parent/guardian, or the student if age 18 or over. The posting of full names, addresses, pictures, videos, and audio recordings that allow the identification of individuals must have signed consent.
    - **Staff:** It is expected that all staff support and promote communications initiatives between schools, home and the community. This includes the use of pictures and names listed on MHPSD websites, social media and in other direct and indirect communications. Any staff member that does not want their picture or name shared publicly is asked to speak with their administrator to withdraw consent.
    - **Volunteers/guests:** There will be instances where photos and videos are taken in classrooms or at non-public MHPSD functions where volunteers or guests are present. Individuals that take photos/videos are required to obtain verbal consent from the volunteer/guest before posting publicly.
    - **Public events:** Schools are permitted to take photos and videos at events where members of the public are invited. Schools are required to inform visitors and guests that photos and videos will be taken at the event and that any individual who does not wish to have their picture posted publicly needs to speak with administration.
2. All accounts will be used in a responsible, ethical and legal manner, appropriate for an educational setting.
3. A work-related email address must be used when creating social media accounts; except for Facebook. Facebook administrators are required to use their personal Facebook account to manage the Division page.
4. The Division will have a minimum of two designates responsible for administration of social media accounts.
5. Content posted will align with the mission and vision of the Division and will follow policies and procedures.
6. Social Media is intended to complement direct communications. A consistent approach to the visual content and messaging is important for an online presence. All posts will use “We” rather than “I” in communications.

PROCEDURES

1. Recommended updates for social media include, but are not limited to: calendar of events for the Division (i.e. first day of classes, Division professional development days, Christmas break); school activities that are for the general public (i.e. theatre performances, playoffs for sports teams, science fairs); items of educational or social interest; links to positive news stories; and good news or celebrations in regards to a school, students, staff or Division.
2. All posts, including photos, are subject to applicable provincial legislation.

3. Comments or confidential information are not to be posted on Division-approved accounts including anything related to legal matters, subjects deemed controversial, Division policy/procedures, contractual matters or crisis situations.
4. The Division Facebook account will include the following disclaimers on its page for purposes of transparency and accountability to our stakeholders:
   Ensure all posts are respectful to the MHPSD community and are consistent with policies. Individuals that do not follow the guidelines below will have their posts removed and/or be blocked from the Division's Facebook page:
   4.1. Obscene, racial or disrespectful comments, posts and visuals are not allowed.
   4.2. Comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization are not permitted.
   4.3. Message the account privately regarding personnel issues rather than using social media.
   4.4. MHPSD reserves the right to delete comments that are spam or advertising; are clearly off-topic or disruptive; advocate illegal activity; promote services, products, or political organizations; or violate Board policies and/or administrative procedures. The comments and posts do not necessarily reflect the opinions and/or positions of the Division or the Board.
5. Designate(s) responsible for the administration of social media accounts will endeavor to respond to public requests for information in a timely manner. Social media accounts are monitored during work hours only. If an emergency should arise, exceptions will be made under approval of senior administration.

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

In the event that a crisis should occur within the Division, whether it is at the Division office or at one of the schools (as per the tri-divisional "Emergency Protocols"), the following guidelines are in place to assist the communications department in providing insight to the occurrence on social media:
Social media will be monitored for questions that may be posed from concerned citizens. Those individuals will be advised to monitor our social media which will have full details on the circumstance when information is ready to be released.
NOTE: If the circumstance occurs at a school, parents will be advised as necessary through School Messenger.
When full details are released to the Communications Coordinator, a media release is prepared and posted on the Division website. The social media communication will then advise the public of the situation and link to the website address with full details.

REFERENCES

Local Authority Protection of Privacy (POPA) Act

Approved: December 4, 2017
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