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: SCHOOL COUNCILS

PROCEDURE CODE:	*530 AP 006*
Policy Reference: 530 – Communications and Technology	

STAKEHOLDERS

1. Internal

   The internal stakeholders for Medicine Hat Public School Division's (MHPSD) school council social media guidelines are the school council's social media coordinator(s), school council chair, school administration, the Division's communication coordinator, senior administration and the Board.

2. External

   External stakeholders include the schools and parents/guardians of students within the Division.

OVERVIEW

This document provides the guidelines for social media use for MHPSD school councils.

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 recognizes the use of social media as a viable medium to engage staff, students, parents/guardians and volunteers for educational purposes. The Division 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. Approved social media platforms for school council use are Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

School councils that use social media platforms will do so in compliance with the general guidelines used by schools Administrative Procedure 530 P 005 – Social Media Guidelines: Schools, as stated:

1. Users will 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. Signed consent will be provided prior to posting full names, addresses, pictures, videos, and audio recordings that allow the identification of individuals.
2. All accounts will be used in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner, appropriate for an educational setting.
   - Grievances are not to be published to social media
3. Staff and volunteers using social media are required to comply with copyright laws.
4. Social Media is intended to complement school communications. A consistent approach to the visual content and messaging is important for an effective online presence. All posts will use "we" and "us" rather than "I" and "my". Individuals will use a unified voice and not sign their name to a post. School councils and fundraising societies that are engaged in social media will follow the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).

PROCEDURES

1. School council pages will follow and support the mandate of school council; only post or share information that is related to school council events, initiatives and volunteer opportunities. School council pages will follow the vision of the MHPSD and the school.
2. All school-based reminders, events and emergency communication will be published through the main school account only, to avoid confusion for families and to ensure that the information is specific, timely, accurate, and enhances the credibility of communications efforts.
3. Page posts, comments or private messages that are unrelated to school council will be removed and directed to school administration.
4. Any social media site/account created and maintained by a school councils is owned by the school and managed by school council volunteers. The school's resources will not be used to create and maintain such accounts. Use of school logos online is allowed with written permission (email confirmation is sufficient) from the school administrator.
5. School Councils should ensure a motion is passed to create or develop a social media site/account prior to doing so. A school council designate will be assigned to maintain content on social media sites.

   5.1. **Accounts: School Council Facebook pages will have one administrator as a full access administrator on the page. The login and password for Instagram and Twitter will be shared with school administration.** Members of the administration team are only permitted to post or remove content from the school council after notifying the school council chair.

6. It is recommended that comments are reviewed daily unless otherwise stated on the site.
7. Confidentiality of students must be protected. The full names of students, student photos and samples of their schoolwork are only posted when approval from their parent/guardian is obtained. In the case of an adult student, written approval can be given by the student.
8. Designate(s) responsible for the administration of social media accounts will endeavor to respond to public requests for information in a timely manner.
9. School councils may provide a link on the school website to their social media site.
10. The school council Facebook account will include the following disclaimers on its page for purposes of transparency and accountability to MHPSD stakeholders:
    10.1. Obscene, racial or disrespectful comments, posts and visuals will not be allowed.
    10.2. Comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization will not be permitted.
    10.3. Message the account privately regarding personnel issues rather than publicly.
    10.4. Each school reserves the right to delete comments that are:
        - spam;
        - advertising;
        - off-topic or disruptive;
        - inflammatory;
        - public shaming;
        - advocate illegal activity;
        - promote services, products, or political organizations;
        - violate Board policies and/or administrative procedures;
        - do not reflect the opinions and/or position of the Board.
11. If the guidelines are not followed and if the school administration or Division has concerns that have not been addressed within 24 hours of notification, the school administration reserves the right to remove content.
    11.1. If an issue cannot be resolved at the school level, the superintendent will have the final authority.
    11.2. A post or discussion may be immediately removed (without notice) at the discretion of MHPSD administration with an acknowledgment noted of why the retraction was necessary.

REFERENCES

530 P 005 – Social Media Guidelines: Schools
Alberta School Councils' Association
Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Personal Information Protection Act

Approved: December 4, 2017
Revised: December 2, 2019