

MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 76

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

TITLE: Social Media Guidelines: Schools	POLICY REFERENCE: 570 Cyber Space and Technology Use Protocol
PROCEDURE CODE: 570 P 005	

STAKEHOLDERS

Internal

The internal stakeholders for Medicine Hat Public School District schools' Social Media Guidelines are the School's Social Media Coordinators (consisting of at least one school administrator), School Administration, the District's Communication Coordinator, Senior Administration, and potentially the Board of Trustees.

External

External stakeholders are the schools and the parents of students within our District.

OVERVIEW

This document provides the guidelines for Medicine Hat School District No. 76 regarding the use of social media usage at the school level.

PURPOSE

The District understands students, parents and employees use technology to engage, communicate and connect with each other. As a District, we recognize that using social media will enable our teams, schools, teachers, and parents to develop stronger relationships with key stakeholders, and keep them informed in a timely manner. We acknowledge the freedom of opinion, discussion and sharing of information, and support interactions that reflect our vision. We also acknowledge the limitations that social media can have regarding privacy; the guidelines outlined below ensure we are respectful, responsible, accountable and professional in our use of social media.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Users shall not disclose personal, sensitive or confidential information without prior written consent. Professionalism, privacy, transparency or respect must not be compromised. This falls in line with the Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- A work-related email address must be used when creating social media accounts.
- The District and schools will have a minimum of two designates responsible for content management of all social media accounts. Accounts will be monitored to ensure materials posted do not violate any District policies and procedures, and are updated regularly.
- All accounts are to be used in a responsible, ethical and legal manner, and appropriate for an educational setting.

- Social Media is intended to complement our schools' communications. A consistent approach to the look and roll out of content is important for all of our online presence. All posts will use "We" rather than I in communications.

PROCEDURES

1. Whenever possible, it is recommended to use accepted linking practices that update social media sites when updating sections of the school websites.
2. Social media accounts are to be updated regularly to keep the site engaging.
3. Recommended updates for social media include, but are not limited to: calendar of events for the District and/or school (ie. First Day of Classes, Professional Development Days, Christmas Break); school activities (i.e. Theatre Shows, Playoffs for sports teams, Science Fairs, Parent Council Meetings); items of educational or social interest; links to positive news stories; and good news or celebrations in regards to a school, students, staff or the District.
4. Details including the time and locations for school excursions are not to be communicated prior to the event for the safety of students.
5. All postings, including photos, are subject to applicable provincial legislation at all times. No personal information, including student names, location, etc. should ever be posted on social media without informed consent from students' parents/guardians. This includes, but is not limited to blogs, student work, individual and group photographs, videos featuring the student or other identifying information.
6. Comments or confidential information are not to be posted on District-approved accounts including anything related to legal matters, subjects deemed controversial, District policy/procedures, contractual matters or crisis situations.
7. A post or discussion may be removed at the discretion of School Administration with an acknowledgment noted of why the retraction was necessary. If possible an individual response is preferred.
8. The school's 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 our School's community and are consistent with our policies. Individuals that do not follow the guidelines below will have their posts removed and/or be blocked from the Facebook page:

- Obscene, racial or disrespectful comments, posts and visuals will not be allowed.
- Comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization will not be permitted.
- Message the account privately regarding personnel issues rather than utilizing social media.
- Each school reserves the right to delete comments that are spam or advertising; are clearly off-topic or disruptive; advocate illegal activity; promote particular 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 position of the School Board.

9. Staff members responsible for the administration of social media accounts, on behalf of the school, will endeavor to respond to public requests for information in a timely manner. We encourage staff to establish “professional office hours” and share them with students and parents so that they know if and when you will respond to questions that are posted on social media. The use of automated messages for Direct Messages is a tool to assist in communicating response times.

Social media operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and must be monitored on a regular basis to ensure appropriateness of comments.
10. All schools shall provide the login information and passwords along with the designated staff member(s) associated with all social media pages and sites to the District’s Communications Coordinator, as well as the names of staff who have access to this information.

Proposed:
October 26, 2017
Approved: