

File: JICJB**STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

For purposes of this policy, "social media" means any internet-based messages or communication created through social interaction, where users primarily produce and contribute to the content. Social Media include, but are not limited to, social or professional networking websites/apps, wikis, blogs, virtual worlds, image-sharing websites/apps, and video-sharing websites/apps.

Lack of reference to a specific social media website/app (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) or means of electronic communication (e.g. computer, cell phone, etc.) throughout this policy does not limit its extent or applicability.

All other policies of the district, including, but not limited to the Bullying and Harassment Policy, and the Acceptable Use Policy, apply to online conduct, including engagement in social media. Students are required to uphold the principles of respect for the individual, dignity, honesty, professionalism, concern for and protection of children, security of intellectual property, accuracy, and safety in all interactions, in person or on-line.

Requirements and Prohibitions

Use of social media sites or apps during the school day is prohibited except for instances where those systems are part of the lesson or have been sanctioned by the principal or his/her designee as noted in student handbooks.

Students should only communicate electronically with SPS employees through SPS-approved methods such as the current SPS email systems, through SPS-sponsored communications systems, or through the SPS-supported learning management systems (currently Schoology, Edline, and Google Suite for Education). Exceptions are made if staff and student are family members, or an established family connection is present, or where the Principal or his/her designee authorizes such an exchange, primarily to improve student safety.

The district requires confidential information to be protected at all times and to be disclosed only pursuant to school policy or as otherwise required by law. Students should not include any confidential information about other students or staff members on social media.

Students may not contribute content to social media that could be considered a representation from or statement by the Sharon Public Schools. Students representing groups affiliated with the Sharon Public Schools must fill out a request to have their social media account legitimately affiliated with the district (Policy INJDC).

The School Department retains the right to monitor its internal technology systems for inappropriate use. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions.

The School Committee acknowledges that from time to time a student may contact a trusted staff member in a crisis or other unpredictable situation, using a means of personal communication prohibited by this policy. Students should be aware that, if in the sound judgment of the staff member, any of the policies

presented here need to be broken in order to ensure the immediate well-being of a student, the staff member should act accordingly in the best interest of the student. The matter will then be brought to the attention of the building administrator, or his/her designee in such matters, as soon as possible afterward. Every effort to reestablish normal communications will subsequently be made by the staff member.

Guidelines for Student Use of Social Media

1. When communicating online or interacting in any social network, students should assume that what is written or posted will be neither private nor temporary.
2. Students should understand the privacy settings and policies of sites in which they participate, including who owns the rights to information and images posted, and whether information and images may be further promulgated by another party.
3. Students should err on the side of caution when interacting online, remaining aware that any online activities are not private and may be visible to past, current, or prospective employers, college staff, parents, and community members, and thus reflect (positively or negatively) directly or indirectly on the student.
4. When on school property, including buses and vans, students should refrain from knowingly recording or posting on their own social media sites photographs, videos, or other recordings of school employees, students, parents, or other school-community members without their written permission and, in the case of minor students, the express permission of the Superintendent. Recording without permission may open up a student to legal action.
5. Students should be aware that employees are prohibited from initiating or accepting any person-to-person social media connection requests (e.g. "friending" on Facebook) from current SPS students unless the student is a family member.
6. Student club/group leaders should send communications to club/group members in more ways than just social media to avoid excluding non-social-media users.

Revised: December 7, 2016; Accepted December 21, 2016