GCSB - USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

The Board recognizes that social media platforms have become important means of communication with potential pedagogical value. This policy sets forth expectations for school employees in regard to social media use for school-related and personal purposes. Employees are expected to preserve the integrity of the learning environment in their use of social media, and must maintain professional boundaries with students at all times. Approved uses of social media platforms are only intended to be a supplementary, and, in general, not a primary means of communicating information to students, families and/or the community.

"Social media" includes technology and/or Internet-based tool(s) for communicating or sharing information, opinions and ideas with others, including but not limited to websites, blogs, forums, social networking platforms, image sharing applications and news sites.

I. Approval Procedure

A school employee who desires to use social media for school-related purposes shall submit a proposal and request for approval to their building administrator or supervisor. Proposals for the school-related use of social media should include an articulated educational purpose and be appropriate to the students' ages, level(s) of understanding, and range(s) of knowledge. Use of social media with students is limited to grades seven and higher. Any student under 13 needs parent/guardian permission to access approved social media.

The building administrator or supervisor may request additional information prior to making a decision on a proposal. The building administrator or supervisor may also consult with the Superintendent or others as appropriate in evaluating the request.

The building administrator or supervisor may take one of the following actions:

I. Approval;

II. Approval with required modifications;

III. Denial.

The decision of the building administrator or supervisor shall be in writing and the decision is final. The building administrator or supervisor may withdraw approval for the use of social media at any time for good reason, with appropriate notice to the employee.

Any later modifications to a proposal that has already been approved must be submitted to the building administrator or supervisor and approved prior to implementation.

Approved proposals for the school-related use of social media must be resubmitted annually by September 30th for review. If an employee discontinues their use of approved social media, the building administrator or supervisor must be notified.

II. Terms of Use

The school-related use of social media approved in accordance with this policy is subject to the following terms and conditions:

I. Content on approved social media shall at all times comply with school unit policies, procedures and guidelines as well as with any applicable state and federal laws (including confidentiality laws).

II. The responsible school employee shall monitor any student use of approved social media and shall remove content that violates school unit policies, procedures or guidelines, and/or state or federal laws. Any inappropriate use of approved social media shall be reported to the building principal/supervisor.

III. The school unit may monitor any approved social media for compliance with applicable Board policies/procedures, other school rules, and laws.

III. Personal Use of Social Media

Employees must keep their professional social media presence separate from their personal social media. Employees shall not use work time or their work-issued email address/contact information for personal use of social media.

School employees are prohibited from "friending" students or engaging in any other interactions with students on social media (outside of any school-approved activity).

School employees are expected to exhibit professional decorum on social media and not engage in conduct that violates Board policies, procedures and guidelines; which adversely affects their capacity to serve as a role model for students; or which distracts from or disrupts the educational process or the operations of the schools.

Violations of this policy may result in the withdrawal of approval to utilize social media for school purposes and/or disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances of each case.

IV. School Administrator Use of Social Media

Like School employees and Board members, school administrators (such as the Superintendent, a Principal, the Special Education Director, etc.) shall have no authority to speak on behalf of Cape Elizabeth School Department unless specifically designated to do so. Where no such authority exists, school administrators shall make it clear that they are speaking in their individual capacity when posting or engaging in other activity on social media related to school business and that their views or other expressive activities are their own, are not intended to represent the views of the Board, and are not endorsed by or undertaken on behalf of the Board. This applies to an administrator's own social media pages, the social media pages of others, and the district's social media pages.

Cross Reference:

- GCSA / GCSA-R – Employee Use of School-Issued Computers/Devices and the Internet
- GBEBB – Staff Conduct with Students

- IJND – School Website and Social Media
- IJNDB / IJNDB-R – Student Use of School-Issued Computers/Devices and the Internet

Adopted:

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