

<b>Section G:</b>  <b>Human Resources</b>	<b>Knox County Board of Education Policy</b>		
	<b>Social Media</b>	Descriptor Code:	Issued:
		<b>G-161</b>	<b>10/18</b>
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## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media has become an increasingly important part of the District's ability to communicate with families, students, staff and the community. The purpose of this policy is to guide District employees in navigating the appropriate professional, educational and private use of social media as a communication and learning tool.

- The District provides internal password-protected social media tools and allows use of district approved resources for eLearning and research focused on communication, collaboration and creativity. These sites are limited to the educational community and are internal to KCS.
- Public online social media platforms include websites, blogs, wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds and any other interactive social media generally available to the public on the internet (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, etc.).

## **EMPLOYEES**

The use of social media should be designed to reasonably support instructional, educational or extracurricular programs under the direct supervision of building administration. KCS employees will be held accountable for the content of the communications they post on social media sites.

### **Professional Use of Social Media**

- All KCS policies that apply to in-person professional interactions apply equally to online professional activities.
- Creation of a school-based social media account requires prior authorization from a KCS building-level supervisor.
- A District employee shall be designated as the account manager of an authorized social media account. Students over the age of 13 who have obtained parental permission may be given access privileges to post under the supervision of a district employee. (Parents and/or community members should not be the designated account managers.) For group pages, multiple account managers or "account administrators" are recommended. Any security, log- in credentials, or passwords for such accounts must be shared with the account manager's building-level supervisor.
- Employees using social media for professional purposes do not have expectation of privacy with regard to their use of such media. KCS supervisors, or their designees, will regularly monitor professional social media accounts to protect the school community.
- Employees are responsible for protecting confidential information, including, but not limited to compliance with Family Educational Privacy Rights Act (FERPA).<sup>1</sup> No personally identifiable information, including tagging the student, may be posted on professional social media sites, including photographs and videos of students, without consent of the students' parents/legal

guardians. “Tagging” is the practice of identifying a user in the context of a comment or photo. Security settings should be set to ensure that a professional profile cannot be tagged by other users and that only authorized people can post as an administrator of the page.

- Employees have an individual responsibility to understand the rules of the social media being used and act to ensure the safety of students.
- Employees are responsible for reporting use of social media not in accordance with KCS policy to building administration.
- When using professional social media accounts or digital communication tools to connect and communicate with students and/or families, KCS staff should always comply with all Board of Education policies including, but not limited to:

Civility Code (B-230)

Staff-Student Relations (G-140)

Staff-Community Relations (G-150)

Use of Copyrighted Materials (I-230)

Harassment of Students (J-210)

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying or Cyber-bullying (J-211)

Student Publications (J-470)

- Close surveillance of any professional social media page is recommended to ensure that any undesired content is discovered and addressed promptly.
- The Director of Schools may suspend or remove an account that does not adhere to KCS policy.

#### **Personal Use of Social Media**

- The District recognizes personal use of public online social media is left to the discretion of each employee.
- Employees shall not directly communicate with individual students who are currently enrolled in KCS schools via personal social media accounts with the exception of a relative. If employees receive a request from a current student to connect or communicate through a personal social media account, they should refuse the request.
- Employees shall not tag other District employees, District volunteers, vendors or contractors without prior permission of the individuals being tagged.
- The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites is prohibited.
- Employees are prohibited from using the district or school logo in any personal posting and should not conduct school business on personal sites without written permission from Knox County Schools.

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#### **Legal Reference:**

1. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99.