

Responsible Use of Social Media Administrative Regulations

Purpose

The purpose of the Carroll County Public Schools responsible use of social media policy and administrative regulations is to define expectations for the responsible use of social media by CCPS staff to enhance the educational process and improve system-wide communication efforts.

Scope

The Board of Education is committed to the responsible use of social media to further its goals to facilitate community engagement, encourage collaborative communications, and enhance the educational process. The Board recognizes the potential of social media to foster relationships with the community and to celebrate school system and student success. The scope of these regulations will cover the organizational and personal use of social media.

Definitions

- **Social Media** – any form of electronic communication through which users communicate and/or create online communities to share information, ideas, messages, and other content. Social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and blogs.
- **Organizational Use of Social Media** – use of social media by CCPS employees for official business (CCPS work-related purposes). In these instances, community members may reasonably believe that employees are representing CCPS or its views and positions and that employees are communicating with community members (including students, parents, and others) in an official capacity. CCPS employees use these accounts to perform their CCPS duties, conduct official business, represent CCPS, and share information about CCPS programs, services, and activities on behalf of the organization.
- **Personal Use of Social Media** – use of social media by CCPS employees for non-work-related purposes. In these instances, it is clear that employees are not representing CCPS in any way and that employees are not communicating with community members (including students, parents, and others) in an official capacity.

Responsibilities

- Communications Officer and professionals from the instructional technology team for review of the policy and regulations.
- Principals and department heads for monitoring the content of organizational accounts within their schools/departments.

Procedures

Expectations for the organizational use of social media:

1. Organizational social media accounts created, used, or maintained by employees are the property of CCPS and may be modified or deleted by CCPS at any time.

2. CCPS reserves the right to exercise editorial oversight and control over all CCPS organizational social media.
3. Principals and administrators are ultimately responsible for organizational social media created for or used by their school or department, just as they are responsible for other communications from their school or department.
4. Employees who wish to develop or maintain an organizational social media presence must:
 - Adhere to CCPS social media naming conventions, which are updated annually and communicated to employees by the Communications Officer.
 - Use their CCPS email address when registering for a social media account.
 - Acknowledge that CCPS sites may be monitored to ensure compliance with all relevant Board policies and CCPS regulations.
 - Adhere to student privacy and other relevant laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines when using social media.
 - Recognize that the use of social media is for communication from school to home and not home to school.
 - Refrain from photographing or sharing images of students who are not authorized by their parents or guardians to be photographed or appear in media. This restriction does not apply to extracurricular activities or events that are open to the public.
 - Monitor their sites regularly and routinely to ensure they are appropriately maintained.
5. Employees will not use an organizational social media presence to generate, discuss, share, reference, comment on, re-post, link to, or otherwise disseminate:
 - Anything that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, improper, defamatory, demeaning, or disparaging to students, parents, community members, or fellow employees, or anything that could be viewed as bullying or contrary to the mission of the school system.
 - Confidential, private, or proprietary items, including but not limited to privileged information related to assessments, curriculum, personnel issues, or student information.
6. Employees will not use any social media platform for organizational purposes that allows the anonymous posting of content or the inability to trace the sender or recipient of messages.
7. Any inactive or obsolete organizational social media accounts will be deleted by the employee who maintains the account, or transferred to his/her successor if appropriate. Because it is possible that a domain name or social media handle or tag could retain value for future use, the employee will consult with his/her supervisor and/or the Communications Officer before deleting an account.

Expectations for the personal use of social media:

Employees may elect to have a personal social media presence; however, it is important that employees recognize they are often viewed as public ambassadors for education and community role models based on their employment with CCPS. Consequently, the following expectations and advice are provided:

1. Employees are encouraged to be mindful of relevant Board policies and CCPS regulations in their personal use of social media.
2. Employees should be aware that they may be identified by the community as working for and representing CCPS even on their personal social media, and users can search by anything on the profile.
3. Employees are encouraged to monitor comments posted on the page and delete any inappropriate language or content.
4. Employees are encouraged to set privacy settings so only “friends” can review their posted information.
5. When using personal social media, employees should **not**:
 - Use CCPS logos or CCPS copyrighted material without the express written consent of CCPS.
 - Accept or list CCPS students as “friends” or followers, or knowingly allow students access to their personal social media (unless the student is related to the employee).
 - Post content that negatively impacts their ability to perform in their jobs (i.e. vulgar or obscene language, materials, photos, or links that may be considered inappropriate or unprofessional).
 - Use CCPS devices or engage in personal social media activity during work hours, with the exception of duty-free lunch periods.
 - Communicate in an official capacity with CCPS students or their parents/guardians.
 - Generate, discuss, share, reference, comment on, re-post, link to, or otherwise disseminate content related to identifiable CCPS students (unless the student is related to the employee and provided the content is not improper or inappropriate).
 - Speak on behalf of the views or positions of CCPS.
 - Conduct CCPS business.
 - Libel or defame CCPS students or parents, the Board of Education of Carroll County, individual Board members, or other CCPS employees.
 - Engage in any activity or conduct that violates Board policies, CCPS regulations, or federal, state, or local laws.