Social Media Policy

Introduction
While social networking should not be our primary means for communicating with community members, it is a growing medium that should not be ignored by our school district. The crafting of Social Media Guidelines does not serve to encourage social media messaging across the district, but rather provide an aligned and straight forward set of expectations for the practice and use of social media.

Guidelines

Social Media
These guidelines address employees’ use of publicly available social media networks including: personal web sites, web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media. Use of these media for personal use during district time or on district equipment is prohibited. In addition, employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws or district policies.

Social Media Use as a School District
The HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT Facebook page shall post breaking news, weather closings, legislative news and other updates. However, the HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT will not rely solely on Facebook for these communications. School closings and other urgent information will be relayed as appropriate via automated telephone services, the HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT website, and/or the news media. The HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT Facebook page will serve as two-way communication.

Social Media Use by Schools
Social media sites may be used to facilitate communication among groups of students or school community stakeholders in support of instructional and school-sanctioned extra-curricular programs. A school's principal is the only person with the authority to authorize an official school social media presence. Teachers/staff must ensure that the social media tools they are using have been submitted to the principal for approval.

Social Media for Personal Use by HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT Employees
The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. When employees choose to join or engage with District students, families or fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside those approved by the district, they are advised to maintain their professionalism as a HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT employee.

Employees are responsible for what they post on their own sites and on the sites of others. Individuals may be held liable for commentary deemed to be libelous, defamatory, obscene or similarly inappropriate. Employees should remember that all online communications are stored and can be monitored.
General Conduct for District-Approved Social Media

- Employees should be aware that they will be identified as working for representing the school in what they do and say online.
- Communication with the students should be professional and appropriate within the context of the teacher/student relationship.
- Employees should establish clear rules and expectations for all network participants. Just as in the classroom setting, online rules should be established to foster an atmosphere of respect, trust and clear professional boundaries.
- Parents should be informed of the social media tools being used and the expectations for appropriate behavior.
- Employees must not discuss students or coworkers publicly.
- Teachers should treat social media as an extension of the classroom, and should weigh every posting for how it affects their effectiveness as teachers.
- Employees must not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous.
- All laws pertaining to the HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT Acceptable Use Policy must be obeyed.
- There is no such thing as a truly "private" social media site: search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date, comments can be forwarded or copied and archival systems save information even if you delete a post.
- Employees must not participate in controversial issues through social media.

Privacy and Content
- Teachers/employees have the obligation to keep all student information private.
- Users must pay close attention to the site’s security settings and allow only approved participants access to the site.
- Employees must adhere to District policy when posting student pictures and using student names. Images that include students whose parents have not signed a Student Media Release Form should not be posted.
- If a staff member learns of information on a social networking site that falls under mandatory reporting guidelines, such reporting guidelines remain. What are the mandatory guidelines?
Social Media Registration Form

Year: _________________________________________________
Teacher/Staff Name: ____________________________________________________________________
Department/Title/Activity: _______________  
Date: _______________________________________

I understand that I will be representing the HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT online and that my use of social media in this context should be related to HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT instructional, communication or co-curricular purposes. I have read the HOWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT guidelines for social media use and agree to respect those measures.

Social Media you plan to use: ______________________________________________________

URL, Page, Handle etc.: __________________________________________________________

Instructional/Functional Purpose: _______________________________________________________

Social Media you plan to use: ______________________________________________________

URL, Page, Handle etc.: __________________________________________________________

Instructional/Functional Purpose: _______________________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________________Date:______________________

Administrative Approval by:
Print Name_________________________Title:___________________________________________
Signature_________________________Date ______________________