

SOCIAL MEDIA – Student Use

Edmond Public Schools recognizes the value and benefit of using electronic media to communicate digitally with students, staff and families in an effort to engage stakeholders and enhance the learning experience. Whether or not a student chooses to participate in online social networking or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own decision. Free speech protects those who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that schools can discipline students if their speech, including online postings, interferes with the learning environment or causes a disruption to the normal operations at school, violates district policy or the laws of the State of Oklahoma.

1. Definitions

A. Social media refers to any user generated content sites generally available to the public or consumers that include, but are not limited to sites like Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Google apps, Skype, Wikis, social networks, podcasts, forums, blogs, and other content sharing sites.

B. District approved password-protected social media tools are those that fall within the district's electronic technologies network or which the district has approved for educational use.

2. Student Use of Social Media:

A. As a public institution, Edmond Schools is supportive of a student's personal rights to freedom of speech, expression and association, including the use of electronic devices and social networks. Students are expected to adhere to all district rules and guidelines when using social media. (Refer to Policy 5720)

B. Students must also comply with any and all state and federal laws pertaining to the use of social media. Students will be held accountable for the content of their electronic communications in relation to school, staff, and students that causes harm or might harm to others and/or causes a disruption to the normal operations at school.

C. Social media venues are very public and leave a digital footprint for all to see, including future employers. Students should observe social media policy guidelines when referring to the district, its schools, students, programs/activities, employees, volunteers and communities on social media networks.

D. In order to be safe online students should never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures.

E. Students should not use the intellectual property of others without their permission. It is a violation of copyright law to copy and paste other's thoughts. Pictures may also be protected under copyright laws. Users should verify they have permission to use any information that is not their own.

F. Students may not act or purport to act as a spokesperson for the district or post comments as a representative of the district, except as authorized by school personnel. Information communicated must be consistent with the purpose and mission of the organization they are representing.

3. Consequences for Violations of Social Media Policy:

Reports of a violation of this policy may result in an investigation of the user's posts, files, internet usage, or other electronic/digital media. The investigation and its scope will be reasonable and calculated to disclose the existence and nature of the alleged violation. Illegal behavior is subject to criminal charges. Students who engage in cyberbullying also risk civil charges and/or lawsuits that may be filed against them by victims. The district will fully cooperate with law enforcement agencies in any and all investigations involving students, electronic devices and social media.

Consequences for violations will be determined in accordance with Policy 4401 as well as state and federal laws, considering the type of violation, past history, and level of the user. This may include loss of internet access and/or network access and notifying the student's parent/guardian of an incident.