

Administrative Procedure 146 – Appendix A

Appendix A – SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STAFF & PERSONAL USE

Background

Staff are entitled to their private and personal lives; however, off-duty conduct matters, and sound judgement and due care must be exercised when posting on social media. Behave in all circumstances online as a professional, as you would in the community.

Education is a public profession. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that teachers' off-duty conduct, even when not directly related to students, is relevant to their suitability to teach. As such, all staff should use sound judgement and due care when using social media while on and off duty.

These guidelines aim to provide direction for staff and their own personal use when participating in online social media activities.

Guidelines

For Authorization

1. Board authorization is not required for staff to open a personal social media account. However, private personal email addresses should be used on personal social media applications. Do not self-identify as a BGSD employee on your personal accounts.
2. If you plan to use social media for instructional purposes, please refer to Administrative Procedure 146 - Social Media.

Related to BGSD's Brand

1. All users are responsible for the content/information they publish online.
2. Do not use Division or school logos, marks or images on personal accounts or use these to promote or endorse any product, services, cause or political party or candidate.

For Posting and Conduct

1. ATA members shall follow the rules and expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders. Non-ATA members shall follow the rules and expectations outlined in BGSD's Administrative Procedures Manual. All staff shall adhere to the *BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship Through Admirable Use Agreement*.
2. Alberta courts have ruled that online posting that reflects negatively on one's employer can be grounds for discipline or termination. As such, staff should use sound judgement and due care when using social media while on and off duty.
3. The use of blended personal and professional social media accounts is not permitted. If staff have professional accounts, they should ensure they are not disclosing confidential or personal information as defined by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

4. Do not disclose student record information on personal social media sites, including student work, photographs of students, or any other personally identifiable information about students.
5. Staff should responsibly manage privacy controls over their personal information on social networks.
6. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain since electronic messages are not anonymous.
7. All online behaviour, including linking to or reposting/sharing content, should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that a user would use face-to-face, and be in accordance with the highest professional standards. Anything posted on social media accounts reflects the Division. Be respectful.
8. Comments related to the Division, all Black Gold schools, its staff, students, or school community members should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion.
9. Before posting photographs on a social media application, consideration should be given as to whether the images reflect the user's professionalism.
10. Staff may choose to include disclaimers on their personal social media that their views are their own and do not reflect the position of BGSD or BGSD; however, such disclaimers do not remove or lessen the requirement of staff to follow the guidelines included herein.

For Student Interaction

1. Maintaining professional boundaries on social media is critical to sustaining public trust and ensuring relationships with students remain professional. BGSD staff have the responsibility of maintaining an appropriate staff-student relationship at all times.
2. It is highly recommended that staff not issue or accept friend requests or follow individual students on social media if they are current students and/or past students under the age of 18. Staff should decline these friend requests on social media.
3. ATA members shall follow the rules and expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders. Non-ATA members shall follow the rules and expectations outlined in BGSD's Administrative Procedures Manual. All staff shall adhere to the *BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship through Admirable Use Agreement*.
4. Alberta courts have ruled that online posting that reflects negatively on one's employer can be grounds for discipline or termination. As such, staff should use sound judgement and due care when using social media while on and off duty.
5. All online dialogue and interactions with students should be for educational purposes only.
6. BGSD staff should not use their personal accounts to communicate with students.
7. Do not send private messages and/or texts to students.
8. Staff should report and seek assistance from the principal if a student attempts and or continues to attempt to contact them inappropriately.
9. If a student contacts a staff member's personal account, that staff member should refer them back to appropriate lines of communication (i.e., educational account, Black Gold email account, etc.).

10. There are concerns about personal duty of care in monitoring social media when a student identifies as in crisis. All the expectations and duties of educators still apply with respect to conduct, responding to a child in need of protection or in crisis, as well as policies and procedures, and specifically regarding bullying, or activities that would be actionable through progressive discipline.

Reference: Aspen View Public School Division Social Media Guidelines for Staff
ATA – E-Liability Brochure
BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship Through Admirable Use Agreement
Brock University Social Media Guidelines
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canadian Criminal Code
Copyright Act
Edmonton Catholic Schools Social Media Guidelines for Schools
EIPS Social Media Guidelines
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Government of Alberta Professional Code of Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
Peel District School Board Social Media Guidelines for Staff
Personal Information Protection Act
University of Alberta Social Media Guidelines
University of Lethbridge Social Media Guidelines
Wild Rose School Division Social Media Guidelines