
RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Background

The Division recognizes the complexities of using social media technologies. Social media can be a useful tool to foster collaboration, enhance communication, and provide users access to diverse perspectives and subject matter. It can also encourage creativity and teach digital citizenship - literacy skills essential in preparing our students for the future. However, unregulated use of social media can lead to distractions, exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, and other issues related to privacy and mental health.

The Division recognizes the importance of regulating social media use in an educational setting and when interacting with stakeholders to ensure its benefits are harnessed while minimizing risks. In compliance with Ministerial Order #042024, this administrative procedure is set to create safe, focused, and supportive learning environments that prioritize student well-being and academic success.

Definitions

Social Media: an online application, platform, and/or tool that allows users to share content, profiles, opinions, ideas, experiences, perspectives, and other media which facilitates interactions between groups of people.

School-Based Social Media Accounts: accounts that are created, administered, monitored, and moderated by GYPSD staff and/or school council(s) that are associated with a school within GYPSD.

Division-Wide Social Media Accounts: accounts that are created, administered, monitored, and moderated by the Office of the Superintendent or a delegated staff member on behalf of GYPSD.

Additional Affiliated Accounts: social media accounts affiliated with a school where content on a specific department, group, subject, classroom, team, or school council is considered an extension of the school ****Schools are encouraged to merge existing accounts (school-based and affiliated) into one single school account to improve oversight and streamline information available to stakeholders.**

Closed Educational Social Media: a subset of social media applications, platforms, and/or tools that have parameters in place to restrict access to internal users for whom it is intended (i.e. Hapāra, Google Classroom, or Google Chat), which have been approved by the Division.

Division-Managed School Networks (DMSN): includes accessing the internet or Grande Yellowhead Public School Division digital resources while on school property.

Division-Managed Extended Networks (DMEN): includes accessing the internet or Grande Yellowhead Public School Division digital resources during Divisional-operated transportation services.

Users: refers to students, staff, parents, and other school stakeholders that are using Division-

wide or school-based social media applications, platforms, and/or tools.

Professional Social Media Accounts: accounts that GYPSD employees hold used for professional purposes such as professional development and networking.

Personal Social Media Accounts: accounts that GYPSD employees hold used exclusively for personal purposes unrelated to their employment within GYPSD.

GYPSD Role Account: an account for the express use of administering social media accounts within the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division.

Procedures

1. Security and Privacy Impacts

- 1.1 The Director of Information Technology will monitor and assess the risk posed by social media applications, platforms, and tools and their potential effect on Division equipment and data systems on an ongoing basis.
- 1.2 Inform the Director of Information Technology, who will evaluate the proposed social media application, platform, and/or tool for possible security and privacy concerns.
- 1.3 Users will be informed when access to a social media site is disabled due to risk or threat, as deemed by the Director of Information Technology, or does not adhere to the procedures outlined in this administrative procedure.

2. Content

- 2.1 Users must first confirm written consent from the parents/guardians of students under 18, gained annually through the student registration form.
- 2.2 Users shall not disclose confidential or personal information as defined by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP).
- 2.3 Posting full names, addresses, pictures, videos, originally created content, and audio recordings that allow the identification of individuals must have signed consent as per the applicable copyright laws, FOIP, provincial legislation, Board Policies, and/or Administrative Procedures.
- 2.4 Staff will not use their position, knowledge, or the Division's resources to compromise themselves or the Board in performing their assignment.

3. Limited Use and Exceptions

- 3.1 Teachers may use closed educational social media applications, platforms, and/or tools with students that the Division has approved.
- 3.2 Principal, or equivalent, will document all circumstances in which these exceptions have been granted on Appendix 145 A Form – *Personal Mobile Device Use Exceptions*, which may include:
 - 3.2.1 class assignments and reminders;
 - 3.2.2 information to students - for example, time and place of extracurricular activities;
 - 3.2.3 closed discussion forums.
- 3.3 Teachers are responsible for the oversight and monitoring of student use with the closed social media applications.

4. Student Use

- 4.1 Students are not permitted to access and/or use personal social media accounts:
 - 4.1.1 during both instructional and non-instructional time;
 - 4.1.2 on DMSN or DMEN;
 - 4.1.3 from Division-owned digital devices;
 - 4.1.4 from personal mobile devices;
 - 4.1.5 during school-led off-campus activities (i.e. field trips)
 - 4.1.6 when riding a Division-operated school bus.
- 4.2 Students cannot use their GYPSD Gmail account to register or use personal social media applications, platforms, and/or tools.

5. Staff Use

- 5.1 Comments or confidential information related to human resources, legal matters, controversial subjects, Division policy/procedures, contractual matters, or critical situations are not to be posted on any social media application, platform, and/or tool.
- 5.2 Employment with GYPSD is a public profession, and staff off-duty conduct, even when not directly related to students, is relevant and covered by this administrative procedure.
- 5.3 Actions during off-duty hours may impact the employee relationship with GYPSD such that sound judgment and due care must be exercised when engaging in social media. Staff are expected to abide by AP 401 GYPSD Staff Code of Conduct when using social media.
- 5.4 Staff are prohibited from using their GYPSD email account when accessing or creating a personal social media account.
- 5.5 Unless given written permission from a Principal or equivalent or the Office of the Superintendent, staff are not authorized to use social media applications, platforms, and/or tools to represent a school, department, or the Division.
- 5.6 Only information that would be shared in a classroom or professional work setting can be shared using social media on professional social media accounts.
- 5.7 All efforts must be made to maintain a clear distinction between personal and professional social media accounts.

6. Communication

- 6.1 Communication with students is always for educational purposes only through Division-approved social media accounts.
- 6.2 Texting, messaging, or sending a student private message on any social media platform from a personal social media account is prohibited.
- 6.3 If a student initiates communication with a staff member's personal social media account, the student must be referred to the professional or school social media account.
- 6.4 Staff must never accept from nor initiate a follow or friend request to a student using their personal social media account.
- 6.5 School staff must not use personal social media accounts to communicate with parents/guardians.
- 6.6 Staff members must communicate and/or share student information with students and parents/guardians via their assigned GYPSD Gmail account.

- 6.7 As per Board Policy 20, staff have a right to disconnect from work-related communications during evenings and weekends.

7. Division-Wide Social Media Account(s)

- 7.1 The Office of the Superintendent or a delegated staff member will create, administer, moderate, and monitor division-wide social media accounts representing GYPSD.
- 7.2 Staff are only authorized to use social media accounts to represent GYPSD (including departments, classrooms, sports teams, etc.) or create additional affiliated accounts (i.e. classroom or instructional accounts) with documented permission from the Office of the Superintendent.
- 7.3 Aligns with AP 150 and Appendix A.

8. School-Based and Affiliated Social Media Account(s)

- 8.1 Private accounts and accounts not monitored by the principal or equivalent are not considered related to or associated with Grande Yellowhead Public School Division or its schools.
- 8.2 The school-based social media account is an extension of the school and the Division and, therefore, must be publicly accessible.
- 8.3 School-based social media accounts will be administered and monitored by the Principal or equivalent and at least one (1) other designated staff member.
 - 8.3.1 The Office of the Superintendent may request administrative status on any school-based social media account.
- 8.4 Staff are not authorized to use their personal social media accounts to represent a school (including departments, classrooms, sports teams, etc.) or create additional affiliated accounts (i.e. classroom or instructional accounts) without documented permission from their Principal or equivalent.
- 8.5 Staff cannot use their personal or individual GYPSD email account to create a school-based social media account.
- 8.6 The Director of Information Technology will support the Principal or equivalent in creating a specific GYPSD role account(s) to set up all school-based social media accounts.
- 8.7 The Principal or equivalent must inform the Director of Information Technology and Director of Communications of school-based and affiliated social media accounts.

9. Responsibilities of Division-Wide and School-Based Social Media Account Administrators

- 9.1 The Principal or equivalent and the additional account administrator(s) must uphold AP 146 Social Media Use and ensure compliance with all federal, provincial, and Divisional regulations.
- 9.2 School social media accounts and administrators of these accounts shall set their privacy settings to the highest level of security.
- 9.3 Account administrators are:
 - 9.3.1 required to sign out of the social media account when editing, posting, updating, etc., is completed.
 - 9.3.2 responsible for managing the page, including removing defamatory or inappropriate remarks.

- 9.3.3 Be familiar with, periodically review, and adhere to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy as set by the social media company.
- 9.4 All Division and school social media accounts (including additional affiliated accounts) must reflect the mission, vision, and values of GYPSD. School council social media accounts are seen as an extension of the school and Division.
- 9.5 Social media account administrators reserve the right to delete, remove, or report any posting, media, comment, or mention that violates the school, and/or Division's policies/procedures or is degrading, discriminatory, defamatory, or offensive in any manner or brings the school or Division's reputation into disrepute.
- 9.6 Approved Division-wide and school-based social media accounts will include the following disclaimers on their profiles for purposes of transparent and accountability to stakeholders:

{School Name}'s account provides information related to education and to share and celebrate relevant stories and events taking place at our school. The comments and posts expressed by followers on our social media accounts do not necessarily reflect the opinions and/or position of the Board or its employees.

Reference: Ministerial Order #042024
Section 31, 33, 52, 53, 68, 196, 204, 222, 225, Education Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Personal Information Protection Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canadian Criminal Code
Copyright Act
ATA Code of Professional Conduct
Teaching Profession Act
Aspen View School Division - AP 625
Northland School Division - AP 146
Black Gold School Division - AP 146
Peel District Public Board - Social Media Policy
Edmonton Catholic Schools - AP 146
Elk Island Public Schools - AP 146

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