

Book	Policy Manual
Section	800 Operations
Title	Social Media
Number	815.2
Status	Under review (new policy)

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A

2. 24 P.S. 1302-A

3. 22 PA Code 12.3

Adopted **May 30, 2017**

Purpose

Due to the wealth of new and ever developing social media tools available to students and staff, and the potential to reach audiences far beyond the School District, this policy is necessary to ensure student and staff safety. The rapid expansion of social media and online communication media “use” translates into a greater level of responsibility and accountability for students, parents and staff.

Authority

The District has a responsibility to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all students during the school day. (§ 12.3 amended under section 2603-B of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § 26-2603-B))

Definitions

The District recognizes that often teachers, students, staff, and other school community members use social media or social networking websites and applications such as, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, blogs, YouTube, Google Apps, wikis, virtual world, blogging, microblogging, et cetera as a way to connect, collaborate and communicate with others, share educational resources, create content, demonstrate originality, engage in the entrepreneurial spirit, enhance the school experience, and network within and outside of the school community. In the realm social media, the lines are often blurred between what is public or private, personal or professional. Many of these sites and applications use personal profiles where users post information about themselves and others.

Guidelines

Student In-School Use

Students **MUST** use good judgment, practice self-protection and post with care; closely guard personal information including birth dates, physical and online addresses, location, phone numbers, pictures, passwords and other identifiable descriptions; construct their own original thoughts and ideas and use proper citations for others work. Furthermore, students **MUST** not

misrepresent themselves as someone else and need to be cognizant that their digital footprint begins with the first post. Students **MUST** represent themselves in the manner that represents themselves and Plum Borough School District in a positive respectful manner. Educational use offers students opportunities to learn how to disagree without be disagreeable and respect the personal information, thoughts, ideas and opinions of their peers. Students that encounter inappropriate material or threats should contact the proper law enforcement agencies, school administration or the anonymous report line immediately. It is **illegal** for students to post, share or distribute pornography or sexual exploitive material, images or depictions of themselves or others (PA Title IX § 6312).

Student use of social media must follow the above stated guidelines. Failure to follow the guidelines above or using social media to harass, bully, cyber bully, annoy or disturb others or disrupt the normal school will result in school discipline as outlined in Policy 218, 248 and/or 249.

Taking pictures of another student or staff member without consent or authorization or in a derogatory, demeaning, or negative manner with the intent to harass, annoy or bully will not be tolerated and will result in discipline.

Student Out-of-School Use

Students **SHOULD** use good judgment, practice self-protection and post with care; are encouraged to never give out personal information including birth dates, physical and online addresses, location, phone numbers, pictures, passwords and other identifiable descriptions. Students should be aware that their digital footprint begins with the first post and they begin to develop their online identity. Thus, students should represent themselves, their families and community in a respectful manner. Students that run across inappropriate material or threats should contact the proper law enforcement agencies.

It is **illegal** for students to post, share or distribute pornography or sexual exploitive material, images or depictions of themselves or others (PA Title IX § 6312).

When the use of social media from outside of school directly interferes with the normal school routine, discipline may be implemented. If Social Media is used to harass, bully, cyber bully, another student or staff member and those actions infiltrate the school and cause substantial interference with a student's education, create a threatening environment, and substantial disrupt the orderly operation of the school will result in school discipline as outlined in Policy 218, 248 and/or 249.

Staff Use

School District employees are personally responsible for all comments/information they publish online. Social Media and online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that is used face-to-face, and be in accordance with the highest professional standards. By posting comments having online conversations et cetera on social media sites you

are broadcasting to the world, be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings what you “say” online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a “private conversation” may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum. Comments related to the school should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain. Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject where possible. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues are concerned. Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism. Social media and networking is an extension of your personality, and by that indication an extension of your professional life. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and again refrain from any comment that could be deemed unprofessional. The Plum Borough School District discourages employees from “friending” or communicating students on personal accounts, please refer to Policy 824.

Consequences for Inappropriate, Unauthorized and Illegal Use

All users must be ware of this policy, regulations, rules, procedures, statutes, laws and unlawful use of social media systems and applications. Violation may result in the loss of access and a variety of disciplinary actions as stated in employee and student policies, and penalties provided in laws, statutes, regulations and other laws of legal proceedings.

References:

Child Internet Protection Act – 24 P.S. Sec. 4601, 4604, 4610

Enhancing Education Through Technology Act – 20 U.S.C., Sec 6777

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act – 20 U.C.S, 1232g-34 C.F.R.

PA Title IX 6312

PBSD policies: 216, 218, 219, 220, 233, 235, 237, 247, 248, 249, 317, 317.1, 319, 320, 348, 815, 815.1, 824