

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR STAFF**

The school district shall remind all staff of the need for proper decorum in the digital world. All employees are expected to conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The Plainville Public Schools recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between staff and students and/or their parents/family members/guardians. However, due to the nature of social media sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one's professional life and personal life can be blurred.

### **Professional Responsibility**

- All communications of any nature should be crafted with the expectation that the communication could become public. Staff should also know that any information shared privately with a recipient could be redistributed by such recipient, without the knowledge or consent of the staff member. The same principles which apply to face-face communication also apply to online conversation. In essence, nothing posted online is ever truly "private". The distributor of all content is responsible for his/her content.
- Staff members shall only use Plainville School District pre-approved school-related social media sites/apps such as Class Dojo, Seesaw, and Remind as listed on the school district website and their district issued e-mail account. Requests to use other social media sites/apps for school use must be submitted in writing to the Technology Administrator for approval.
- "Friends" associated with such school-related social media accounts should only be members of the educational community, such as administrators, staff, students and students' parents/family members/guardians. It is strongly recommended that staff members reject friend requests from individuals who do not fit into any of these categories.
- When staff members communicate through social media sites/apps, such information is not retained. The responsibility falls on the staff member to comply with public records laws when using these communication tools to connect with parents, family members and/or guardians. "Public records" shall mean all books, papers, maps, photographs, recorded tapes, financial statements, statistical tabulations, or other documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any officer or employee of any agency, executive office, department, board, commission, bureau, division or authority of the commonwealth, or of any political subdivision thereof, or of any authority established by the general court to serve a public purpose, or any person, corporation, association, partnership or other legal entity which receives or expends public funds for the payment or administration of pensions for any current or former employees of the commonwealth or any political subdivision.
- Staff members shall respect the privacy of all Plainville School staff and must not divulge or post any identifying information such as names, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, photos and videos of any member of the school staff on personal web pages or social media sites/apps including Class Dojo, Seesaw and Remind without their consent.

### **Personal Responsibility**

- Before endeavoring to establish any social **media** account, staff members should familiarize themselves with the features of **saia** account. For example, social networking sites may require account holders to take specific steps to “privatize” the information they place online. Staff should be aware that any information intended to be “private” could become “public” due to their failure to understand and/or properly use such features.
  - For example, if you enable settings such as Facebook’s ability to allow “friends of friends” to view your content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.
- Staff members shall not use their personal social media profile for school related purposes.
- Staff members should also be mindful of the information they post. Online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that are used face-to-face. Even if information is deleted, it still may be stored on a site's server for a period of time. Employees should know that content generated by employees could reflect positively or negatively on the district or may have an impact on the district.
- There shall be no expectation of privacy with respect to the use of Plainville computers or websites.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

At all times and in the use of any form of communication, staff members shall always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of employees to have their personal and medical information kept confidential. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties should not be communicated online in a way that unreasonably exposes such information to retrieval by third parties. For example, through an educational social media account, a staff member may not post or discuss confidential student information on the “wall”, the “information” section, or through any part of the social media account that would be accessible to other staff member’s social network “friends” associated with that account. One must always keep in mind that all online postings and conversations are treated as public records.

### **Posting Photos and/or Videos with Permission**

Staff members may only post or tag photos, videos and/or audio files of students, staff members or school activities with the written permission of the adult individual(s) or permission of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student(s). Written permission does not extend to any additional professional or personal use.

### **Unacceptable Uses**

Staff members should follow the guidelines below:

- Staff members shall not list current Plainville School students as “friends” on their own personal social media sites/apps.
- Staff members shall not give out their personal contact information to current Plainville school students without prior approval of the Plainville School District.

- Staff members shall not engage in prejudicial or discriminatory attacks, sexual harassment or other forms of cyberbullying.
  - Staff members shall not post false, defamatory, threatening, racist, obscene or disrespectful language/ content that might result in disruption of the Plainville School District.
  - Staff members shall not use school approved social media sites/apps for commercial activities, product advertisement and/or political lobbying; or to engage in any other conduct that violates this policy, state and/or federal law.
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- Staff members shall not use the school system's logo or other copyrighted material of the system without the expressed written consent of the School Superintendent.

