

PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Board of Education  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

4126  
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

**PERSONNEL**

Employee Use of Social Media and Personal Electronic Devices

**I. POLICY STATEMENT**

- A. The Prince George’s County Board of Education (Board) believes that family and community engagement is a shared responsibility and essential component for improving the academic outcomes of our students.
- B. The Board believes that, as technologies change the ways that information may be accessed, communicated, and transferred, these changes also provide opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, communication, resource sharing and workplace efficiency.
- C. The Board supports the use of online platforms as well as other media such as blogs and professional social media site/presence, to promote the education mission of Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS). Use of social media shall adhere to standards of conduct and decorum defined in Board policies, PGCPS administrative procedures, the Employee Code of Conduct, and the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

**II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to employees related to the use of professional social media sites/presence by schools and employees to communicate with students, parents, and the community, and the appropriate use of personal social media sites/presence and personal electronic devices.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. *Employee* – An *employee* under this policy is a Board member, an individual employed by the Board, including tenured and non-tenured teachers and certificated and noncertificated individuals, whether full-time, part-time, temporary, substitutes, or interns. In addition, vendors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, and authorized agents who use PGCPS technology and communication systems are expected to comply with this policy and the accompanying administrative procedure.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy does not apply to the Student Member of the Board of Education. The Student Member's conduct is governed by Board Policy 0126 (Code of Conduct for Board Members) and Board Policy 0107 (Code of Ethics).

- B. *Employee Code of Conduct* – A summary of the expectations and standards of conduct that PGCPs expects of employees. It provides the corrective action and disciplinary steps that PGCPs utilizes to address employees' inappropriate behavior or failure to meet PGCPs expectations or standards of conduct.
- C. *Inappropriate communication* – Any communication by an employee with or concerning a student or the student's parents or family, regardless of who initiates the communication, that may be viewed as derogatory, sexual or lewd in content, threatening or harassing, discriminatory, fraternizing or suggestive in nature, or unlawful. Photos or symbols exchanged between employees and students conveying the same message are also improper or inappropriate even if no words are used.
- D. *Live streaming* – A technology that transmit data in real-time over the internet without needing to record and store it first.
- D. *Misuse of social media* – Whether while on or off school grounds, the use of social media in a manner that:
  - 1. Demeans, condemns or berates others, including students, parents/guardians and staff;
  - 2. Incites violence of any kind;
  - 3. Disrupts the operation and/or instructional program of the school or PGCPs office;
  - 4. Embarrasses, defames, harasses or bullies others, including students, parents/guardians and staff (as "harass" and "bully" are defined by Administrative Procedure 4170 – Discrimination and Harassment, and Administrative Procedure 5143 – Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation);
  - 5. Suggests dating, a sexual relationship or any inappropriate interactions with students, as defined and prohibited by Administrative Procedure 4218 – Dating and Sexual Relationships Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors, and Volunteers, and Administrative Procedure 4219 – Inappropriate Interactions Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors, and Volunteers; or
  - 6. Includes any other conduct that violates the Student Code of Conduct, Board policy, administrative procedure, Employee Code of Conduct, or local, state and/or federal laws and regulations.

- E. *Parent(s)/guardian(s)* – Any one of the following individuals who are legally responsible for a student:
1. Biological parent – a natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  2. Adoptive parent – a person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  3. Custodian – a person or agency appointed by a court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
  4. Guardian – a person who has been placed by a court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
  5. Caregiver – an adult resident of Prince George’s County who exercises care, custody or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian.
  6. Foster parent – an adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a State agency or a licensed child placement as provided by Section 5-507 of the Family Law Article.
- F. *Personal electronic device* – Any technology device carried, worn or transported by an individual to receive, communicate, or record voice, image, and/or text content. This definition includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, tablets, laptops, wireless headphones or earbuds, geolocation devices, and wearable technology such as smart watches. This definition does not include location tracking technology that does not have the capability to receive, communicate, or record voice, image, and/or text content (e.g., ankle monitors or Bluetooth trackers).
- G. *Personal social media site* – Access to and use of social media site(s) by employees for non-work-related purposes, including establishing the employee’s own personal presence on a social media site(s). In these instances, the employee’s presence is not as a representative of PGCPs. Further, the employee is not authorized to communicate in their employee capacity with PGCPs students, vendors or contractors with PGCPs, parent(s)/guardian(s), volunteers or other stakeholders on social media sites in the employee’s personal capacity.
- H. *Professional social media site* – Access and use of any form of electronic communication through which users communicate interactively for a bona fide work-related purpose, whether school-based or non-school based.
- I. *Student(s)* – An individual enrolled in a public school system or nonpublic school in the state who is 5 years of age or older and under 22 years of age.

#### IV. **STANDARDS**

- A. The Superintendent/designee shall identify professional social media sites, applications, and software deemed appropriate for instructional purposes on the PGCPs network or on PGCPs devices and discontinue access to any designated social media site, application or software deemed inappropriate for students and for instructional purposes.
- B. The Superintendent/designee shall require that administrative rights are provided to the supervisor of any employee-developed PGCPs-related professional social media site to monitor it for compliance with Administrative Procedure 0700 – Acceptable Use Guidelines, the Employee Code of Conduct, and applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
- C. The Superintendent/designee shall provide training to teachers regarding the appropriate use of professional and personal social media sites, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements, and cybersecurity.
- D. For PGCPs to achieve its educational mission, employees must build and maintain open and honest lines of communication with students and families. To do that, students and families must trust PGCPs to protect the privacy and confidentiality of education records, consistent with applicable law. In addition, PGCPs requires its staff, contractors, vendors, and partners, as well as external researchers, to comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding data collection, privacy, and security, including but not limited to the requirements of FERPA, the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, the Maryland Student Privacy Act of 2015, the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA), Board Policy 5125.4. (Informed Consent Student Data Gathering), and the accompanying administrative procedure.
- E All employee-developed professional social media sites shall provide parent(s)/guardians and students with information about the site’s existence, the materials that may be accessed via the site, and general access to the site.
- F. Employees are prohibited from engaging in misuse of social media sites, whether personal or professional, including using a social media site to communicate confidential information about students or other employees, in accordance with Board Policy 0115 – Information Technology Services – Acceptable Usage Guidelines.
- G. Employees shall only post pictures of students involved in school events on a professional social media site if the parent has provided written permission on the PGCPs publicity release form.
- H. Employees are prohibited from live-streaming classroom events or activities.
- I. Any employee with a personal media site is prohibited from:
  - 1. Conducting personal business on personal social media sites during work hours, or on PGCPs devices at any time;

2. Inappropriate communication with or about PGCPs students, parents, or other employees;
  3. Disclosing student or employee records or personal information;
  4. Posting photos of any PGCPs student, unless that student is a member of the employee's own family;
  5. Posting photos of another PGCPs employee without the consent of the employee or using their personal social media site to embarrass, harass, annoy, or intimidate another PGCPs employee; or
  6. Referencing their relationship with PGCPs or using their personal social media site as a representative of PGCPs or the Board.
- J. Employees shall not use personal electronic devices to text, email, or communicate with students or provide students with private cell phone numbers or email addresses, unless approved by the employee's supervisor.
- K. When an employee becomes aware of an incident that involves the misuse of social media, the employee shall report the incident to their immediate supervisor or in accordance with Administrative Procedure 2200 – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protections.
- L. Employees shall not use a personal electronic device to record students. This prohibition includes recording students to 'memorialize' a student's misbehavior for sharing with or reporting to the employee's supervisor or the parent/guardian.

## **V. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Superintendent shall develop an administrative procedure to implement this policy.

## **VI. REFERENCES**

### **A. Legal**

20 U.S.C. § 1232g, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act  
47 U.S.C. § 254(h), Children's Internet Protection Act  
MD. CODE ANN., LAB. & EMP. § 3-712

### **B. Other Board Policies**

Board Policy 0109 – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection  
Board Policy 0115 – Information Technology Services – Acceptable Usage Guidelines

C. Superintendent's Administrative Procedures

AP 0700 – Information Technology Services – Acceptable Usage Guidelines

AP 2200 – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection

AP 4126 – Employee Use of Social Media and Personal Electronic Devices

**VII. HISTORY**

Policy Adopted

11/13/25