

Hampton City Schools Policy Manual

Book: Hampton City Schools Policy Manual
Section: I – Instruction
Title: SOCIAL MEDIA USE
Number: IIBEC
Status: New
Legal: Code of Virginia, as amended, § 22.1-70.2
Adopted: February __, 2012

Policy Detail

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy, “social media” refers to any Internet-based software or service that allows users to interact with others via the posting of messages, files or other content. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, blogs, online letters to the editor, Twitter, Second Life, MySpace, forums and chat rooms.

The School Board of the City of Hampton recognizes that many of its employees use social media. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. The guidelines for functioning in an electronic world are the same as the standards listed in policy GBAC (Standards of Employee Conduct). The School Board recognizes that employees retain the right to keep their personal interests and business separate from their duties and responsibilities as School Board employees. Because School Board employees have the unique responsibility within the community to serve as role models, leaders, and caretakers for the division’s students, certain conduct is inconsistent with employment with the School Board. For that reason, this policy applies both to company sponsored social media and personal use as it relates to Hampton City Schools.

Employees' use of social media is considered a problem if it:

- Interferes with the employee's work;
- Is used to harass or discriminate against ~~School Board members~~ Hampton City Schools personnel or clients, including co-workers, volunteers, students, parents or those with professional/contractual relationships with the division;
- Creates a hostile work environment;
- Divulges confidential information about Hampton City Schools, ~~School Board members~~ Hampton City Schools personnel or clients, including co-workers, volunteers, students, parents or those with professional/contractual relationships with the division; or
- Harms the goodwill and reputation of Hampton City Schools.

As a result employees are expected to use social media within the following guidelines.

Social Media General Guidelines:

- Do not post any comment or picture involving ~~a School Board member~~, for example, employees, volunteers, students, professional/contractors of Hampton City Schools without their express consent (unless performed as part of official duties within the public relations area).
- Any comment posted about Hampton City Schools, must clearly and conspicuously state that it is being posted in the employee's individual capacity and that the views posted are the employee's alone and do not represent the views of Hampton City Schools.
- Unless given written consent, employees may not use the Hampton City Schools' logo, any school or department logo, or any Hampton City Schools material in their posts.
- All postings on social media must comply with Hampton City Schools' policies on confidentiality and disclosure of confidential information. Employees unsure about the confidential nature of information they are considering posting, should consult their immediate supervisor.
- Do not link to the Hampton City Schools' website or post any school division material on a social media site without written permission.
- Respect copyright laws, and reference or cite sources appropriately. Plagiarism applies online as well as in other forums.
- Employees are responsible for what they write or present on social media. Legal action can be initiated by other employees or any individual that views an employees' social media posts as defamatory, harassing, libelous, or creating a hostile work environment.
- All organizational policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment, code of conduct, nondiscrimination, and protecting confidential and/or proprietary information.
- Employees may not use organizational equipment for non-work-related activities.
- Using social media for other than instructional or official HCS business during work hours or using HCS-provided equipment is strictly prohibited.
- Violation of this policy may lead to discipline up to and including a recommendation for dismissal.

The above policies apply whether using a personal service/site or an HCS-provided service/site.

Social Media Sites Created for Organizational Purposes

Hampton City Schools recognizes that social media might be used for administrative or instructional purposes. Services or sites created by HCS personnel for these purposes shall abide by the following:

- Any created services/sites (blogs, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts and the like) must be registered with the Department of Information Technology whether they are interactive in nature or not; sites that allow interactive postings will require the creator to also list the moderator for the site.
- All interactive sites must include a posting policy which covers:
 - The process for posting including any review process;
 - A statement that inappropriate posts will not be posted or will be removed for inappropriate content;
 - A statement of what constitutes inappropriate content, to include rude, offensive, defamatory, off-topic, or content inappropriate to minors.
- Sites that allow the public, students or others to interact or otherwise post content to social media sites created by HCS personnel must be moderated and include a copy of the posting policy in a conspicuous place on the site.

Acceptable Use

It is considered generally acceptable to use social media for the following purposes:

- To serve as a notification and engagement tool with the public, students, teachers or parents.
- For posting class assignments or encouraging online discussion of educational topics.
- For sharing educational content such as relevant videos, pictures or text. Employees shall observe all copyright laws.
- To serve as a teaching tool for a class project.

Unacceptable Use

It is considered generally unacceptable to use social media for the following purposes:

- The posting of student information including, but not limited to, names, pictures, grades or other information whether permission has been granted or not (unless tasked with operating a social media site in conjunction with public relations duties).
- For non-business-related or non-educational purposes.
- For personal gain or commercial purposes.
- Socializing with students or minors using any electronic media that violates the principles of the ~~Employee Code of Conduct Code of Ethics of the Education Profession~~ as stipulated in policy GBC-R.

Adopted:
2/__/2012

LEGAL REF.:
Code of Virginia, as amended, § [22.1-70.2](#)