

STUDENT AND STAFF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA- AR

I. Definitions

- A. Application Software (App) – software used for specific purposes made available through a cellular phone, computer, computer tablet, or other mobile device.
- B. Cell Phone Misuse – the use of a cellular phone, camera phone, video phone, or other mobile device during the school day or during school-sponsored activities that does not align with the rules established by the respective school for such devices, and is used for the purposes of furthering the misuse of social media.
- C. Cyber bullying (posted in a public forum) – the use of information and communication technology email, mobile device, text message, instant messaging, defamatory personal website, personal polling site, or a combination of these to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group with the intention of physically or psychologically intimidating others for the purpose of furthering misuse of social media.
- D. Electronic Communication – any communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, mobile device, computer, or pager for the purpose of furthering misuse of social media.
- E. Electronic Device Misuse – the use of an electronic device, such as a cellular phone, mobile device, computer, during the school day or during school-sponsored activities that does not align with the rules established by the respective school for such devices. Other electronic devices, include but not limited to, the use of an iPad, iPod, tablet, digital camera, digital highlighter, gaming device, CD player, hand-held game, or use of camera cellular phone, or PDA camera to invade the privacy of another person (in locker rooms, restrooms, etc.).
- F. Misuse of Social Media – the use of social media, whether originating on or off school property, in a manner that demeans, condemns, or berates others, including students and staff; incites violence of any kind, embarrasses, defames, harasses, bullies, or wrongfully impersonates others, including students and staff (“harass” and “bully” are defined in TCPS Policy 10.16/10.16 AR), or in any manner that violates the Code of Conduct, Board policies or regulations, or other local, State, or Federal laws.

- G. Personal Social Media Account – A social media account created by an employee to conduct non-TCPS sanctioned activities.
- H. Professional Social Media Account – A social media account created by an employee to conduct TCPS-sanctioned activities.
- I. Post – Content including but not limited to text, pictures, audio and videos that are added to a social media by an individual.
- J. Social Media Site – any electronic, online, or internet-based platform that allows interactive communication between persons or entities in online communities, including but not limited to, social networks, blogs, website, applications software, internet forums, and wikis.
- K. Staff or Staff Members – any TCPS full- or part-time employee, coach, or volunteer, coach, or club advisor.

II. Use of Social Media by Students

- A. TCPS may provide access to designated social media sites deemed appropriate for students, solely for bona fide instructional purposes, on TCPS computers, tablets, or other mobile devices. TCPS shall designate the social media sites deemed appropriate, which shall be listed and provided to all school administrators. TCPS reserves the right to discontinue access to any designated social media site and/or provide access to additional social media sites as necessary and appropriate for bona fide legitimate instructional purposes for students to use. In instances where access to designated TCPS social media site is provided, TCPS administration shall have access to and may regulate such use, and shall permit with parental/guardian written consent, communications between staff and students.
- B. Student misuse of social media, which has a negative and/or severe impact on a school's learning environment, or risks the safety of staff and students, shall be addressed by TCPS in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- C. Student misuse of social media off school grounds, which has a nexus to, or has an impact on the normal operations of a school, learning environments, or the safety of students or staff, shall be addressed by TCPS in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- D. Students may not use social media to communicate with staff except in cases where such use is regulated and monitored by TCPS administration and the students' parent/guardians for the purpose of furthering a bona fide TCPS educational initiative.

- E. Students may not accept personal invitations from staff members to use social media. In exceptional instances, students may communicate with staff or administration where such use is regulated and monitored by TCPS administration and the students' parents/guardians.
- F. Students may not jeopardize the safe operation of a bus or the safety of bus occupants by the misuse of social media.

III. Use of Social Media by Staff

- A. Employees will obtain approval from their administrator/supervisor prior to creating a social media account for TCPS-sanctioned activities.
- B. Employees who change schools or roles in TCPS will inform their administrator/supervisor of their professional social media account.
- C. Employees using social media professionally will create an account linked to their TCPS email address separate from any personal accounts.
- D. Professional social media accounts created by employees are the property of TCPS.
- E. Upon request, employees will provide the administrator/supervisor administrative access to any professional social media accounts for forums they have created.
- F. When using social media for professional purposes, employees will identify themselves as a TCPS employee.
- G. When using social media in the teaching and learning process, employees will:
 - 1. Configure privacy setting of the social media to limit the visibility of the content to the intended audience.
 - 2. Inform parents of the social media being used, how their children are being contacted online, and the expectations for appropriate behavior.
 - 3. Distribute and discuss communication and collaboration guidelines with students prior to using social media.
- H. Any postings by employees will not reference, link, or contain:
 - 1. Statements that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating; that disparage students, employees, parents, or community members; or that could be viewed as harassment or bullying.

2. Any proprietary items, private or confidential information such as assessments, curriculum, lessons, and personnel issues.
- I. Employees will delete or deactivate TCPS social media accounts that are no longer required.
 - J. Employees will not use TCPS logos for personal use.
 - K. An employee must relinquish information necessary to maintain a professional social media account and may no longer access the account if the employee's job responsibilities change or employment is discontinued through resignation, retirement, termination, or any other cause.
 - L. TCPS reserves the right to enable or disable interactive features on social media and to remove content inconsistent with the stated purpose, mission, and guidelines posted for the use of the social media.

IV. Reporting Misuse of Social Media

- A. When a staff member becomes aware of an incident that involves the misuse of social media, the staff member shall immediately report the incident to a school administrator who shall immediately notify the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Support Services.
- B. If it is determined that the incident is a direct result of cyberbullying, the school administrator shall refer to TCPS policy 10.16/10.16 AR.
- C. The school administrator or the school administrator's designee shall be aware that some acts pertaining to the misuse of social media could also be delinquent acts. Any delinquent acts shall be reported promptly to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- D. Students are encouraged to report the misuse of social media to TCPS administrators, including communications or invitations to communicate with staff members over social media.
- E. Staff shall report the misuse of social media to TCPS administrators, including communications or invitations to communicate with staff members over social media.
- F. No student who, in good faith promptly reports the misuse of social media by others to a school administrator shall be the subject of disciplinary reprisal in any manner. If a student believes he or she is the subject of disciplinary reprisal, the student, or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), is encouraged to report such action immediately to the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Support Services. However, a student's report of the student's own misuse of social media is subject to student discipline in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

G. Any misuse of social media by TCPS staff shall be immediately reported to both the school administrator and the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Support Services, and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.