



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN**

TITLE: Social Media Policy for Employees and Associated Persons

NUMBER: BUL- 5688.0

ISSUER: Michelle King, Senior Deputy Superintendent
School Operations
Office of the Superintendent

DATE: February 1, 2012

ROUTING
All Employees
All Locations

POLICY: The Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to providing a safe and secure learning and working environment for its students, employees and associated persons. The Los Angeles Unified School District encourages positive relationships between students, employees and associated persons. There is, however, a distinction between being supportive of students and the real or perceived breach of confidentiality or misconduct. Employees and all associated persons who work with or have contact with students are expected to follow all District policies, including BUL –999.4, Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) For District Computer Systems, and BUL – 5167.0, Code of Conduct with Students – Distribution and Dissemination Requirement Policy when using social media as a form of communication.

MAJOR CHANGES: This is a new Bulletin.

PURPOSE The purpose of this bulletin is to provide policies and guidelines for social media communications between employees, students, parents and other associated persons; to prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful activities by District users online; to prevent unauthorized disclosure of or access to sensitive information, and to comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). While the District recognizes that during non-work hours employees and students may participate in online social media, blogs, and other online tools, District employees and associated persons should keep in mind that information produced, shared and retrieved by them may be subject to District policies and is a reflection of the school community.

BACKGROUND: Social media has many benefits but when social media postings violate the law or District policies or create a substantial disruption to the school community and/or work environment, the administrator may have an obligation to respond and take appropriate action, including but not limited to investigation and possible discipline.

Under certain circumstances, the District has jurisdiction to discipline employees who violate rules of appropriate conduct, which includes but is not limited to, the use of social networking sites during or outside of work hours. Additionally, the District may not be able to protect or represent employees who incur legal action



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from a second party in response to the employee's behavior in a social networking site.

GUIDELINES: I. DEFINITIONS

Associated Persons includes, but is not limited to, parents, parent-elected leaders of school committees, representatives and volunteers, consultants, contracted employees, walk-on coaches, child care/enrichment program providers, vendors and after-school youth services providers.

Blogs are updated personal journals with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer intended for public viewing.

Digital Publishing Site is an internet personal publishing service that provides products and services for consumers to preserve their digital photos or films, such as Shutterfly, Flickr and YouTube.

Podcasts are audio broadcasts that have been converted to MP3 or other audio file format for playback in a digital music player.

Social Media also referred to as social networking, is a form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Social Networking Websites are [website](#) where users can create and customize their own profiles with photos, videos, and information, such as Facebook, Google+, Habbo and other social networking sites.

Tags (Tagging) are keywords assigned to a webpage for the purpose of easy identification, organization, aggregation and searching. Most social media sites allow users to tag the content they share online such as articles, photos, videos or blog posts. Tags help users find content they are looking for through social media sites and other online platforms.

Wikis are websites that allow the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a browser using a simplified markup language or a text editor.

II. SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND ASSOCIATED PERSONS

Many schools, offices and departments have their own websites and social media networks that enable staff to share school/work-related information. Confidential or privileged information about students or personnel (e.g., grades, attendance records, or other pupil/personnel record information) may be shared



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only on District approved secured connections by authorized individuals.

All existing policies and behavior guidelines that cover employee conduct on the school premises and at school-related activities similarly apply to the online environment in those same venues.

1. Keep personal social network accounts separate from work related accounts. When a student or minor wishes to link to an employee's personal social networking site, redirect them to the school approved website. Accepting invitations to non-school related social networking sites from parents, students or alumni under the age of 18 is strongly discouraged, and on a case-by-case basis, may be prohibited by the site administrator. (BUL – 5167.0, Code of Conduct with Students – Distribution and Dissemination Requirement Policy)
2. Any employee or associated person engaging in inappropriate conduct including the inappropriate use of social media sites during or after school hours may be subject to discipline.
3. Never post any identifying student information including names, videos and photographs on any school-based, personal or professional online forum or social networking website, without the written, informed consent of the child's parent/legal guardian and the principal.
4. Never share confidential or privileged information about students or personnel (e.g., grades, attendance records, or other pupil/personnel record information).
5. Users should have no expectation of privacy regarding their use of District property, network and/or Internet access to files, including email. The District reserves the right to monitor users' online activities and to access, review, copy, and store or delete any electronic communication or files and/or disclose them to others as it deems necessary. [Refer to BUL –999.4, Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) For District Computer Systems]
6. Posting inappropriate threatening, harassing, racist, biased, derogatory, disparaging or bullying comments toward or about any student, employee, or associated person on any website is prohibited and may be subject to discipline.
7. Threats are taken seriously and are subject to law enforcement intervention, including but not limited to formal threat assessments. [Refer to BUL-5610.0, *Workplace Violence, Bullying and Threats (Adult-to-Adult)*]
8. District employees and associated persons are responsible for the



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information they post, share, or respond to online. Employees should utilize privacy settings to control access to personal networks, webpages, profiles, posts, digital media, forums, fan pages, etc. However, be aware that privacy settings bring a false sense of security. Anything posted on the internet may be subject to public viewing and republication by third parties without your knowledge.

9. If you identify yourself online as a school employee or associated person, ensure that your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues, parents, and students. Conduct yourself online according to the same code of ethics and standards set forth in the Acceptable Use Policy. It is recommended that you post a disclaimer on your social media pages stating “The views on this page are personal and do not reflect the views of the Los Angeles Unified School District.”
10. Use of District logos or images on one’s personal social networking sites is prohibited. If you wish to promote a specific LAUSD activity or event, you may do so in accordance with the Office of Communications and Media Services guidelines.
11. Misrepresenting oneself by using someone else’s identity may be identity theft. It is advisable to periodically check that one’s identity has not been compromised.
12. During an emergency situation that impacts the employee’s work site, the employee may post a general statement of well-being to their social network account if doing so does not interfere with their assigned emergency duties.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES AND ASSOCIATED PERSONS

All District employees and associated persons are expected to:

- Adhere to this *Social Media Policy for Employees and Associated Persons*.
- Be familiar with and follow the guidelines and the provisions of this policy.

Additional responsibilities include:

A. Administrator/Designee should:

1. Distribute and communicate this *Social Media Policy for Employees and Associated Persons* to all employees and associated persons.



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2. Investigate reported incidents of employee or associated adults' misconduct or violations of appropriate conduct. [Refer to BUL – 999.4, *Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) For District Computer Systems*, BUL – 5167.0, *Code of Conduct with Students – Distribution and Dissemination Requirement Policy* and other related District policies.]
3. Postings of a serious nature may warrant additional reporting to School Operations and the appropriate reporting agency:
 - a. Threats (contact Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD), School Operations, and Crisis Counseling and Intervention Services).
 - b. Inappropriate or sexualized images of minors (contact law enforcement and LASPD),
 - c. Child pornography (contact law enforcement and LASPD Police),
 - d. Raise a reasonable suspicion of child abuse (contact Child Protective Services).[Refer to BUL-5610.0, *Workplace Violence, Bullying and Threats (Adult-to-Adult)*, BUL-1119.1, *Organizing for Assessing and Managing Threats*, and BUL-1347.2, *Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements*]
4. Inappropriate postings may be documented by taking and printing screen shots or downloading them onto a flashdrive. Evidence should be collected with the permission of the site administrator for the sole purpose of the investigative process and stored in a secured location. This evidence may be used in conference with the employee(s) or associated persons in question. *Caution: do not download or print images of minors or any content that may be considered child pornography. Law enforcement should gather evidence of child pornography, not a District employee.*
5. Document all critical incidents on the Incident System Tracking Accountability Report (iSTAR).
6. The target of online harassment can request removal of objectionable postings by reporting the abuse to the internet service provider or webmaster. Most social networking sites have the capacity to flag objectionable postings with “report abuse” button. The target should document the postings prior to their removal.
7. Monitor and follow-up to ensure that the inappropriate online behavior has stopped.



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- B. Local District Superintendent should:
 - 1. Communicate this *Social Media Policy for Employees and Associated Persons* to administrators and employees and associated persons.
 - 2. Designate administrators to ensure the implementation of this policy.
- C. Central Office Staff should:
 - 1. Support this policy by assisting schools and worksites via trainings, consultation, and distribution of resources.
 - 2. Align this policy with related District initiatives.

IV. GENERAL PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

The following are general procedures for the administrator/supervisor to respond to any complaints:

- A. Secure campus/office safety.
- B. Assure involved parties that allegations and complaints are taken seriously.
- C. Investigate.
- D. Take action to stop the behavior.
- E. Request a factual written statement from the involved parties, to include witnesses if available.
- F. Consult with the Local District, Staff Relations and other offices, as appropriate.
- G. Document actions taken.
- H. Implement disciplinary action as needed.
- I. If appropriate, the victim may file a criminal complaint with law enforcement.
- J. Continue to monitor and address inappropriate behaviors.
- K. If appropriate, complete the Incident System Tracking Accountability Report (iSTAR).
- L. Information about allegations of misconduct or investigations should be handled within the confines of the District's reporting procedures and investigative process. The District will not tolerate retaliation against anyone for filing a complaint or participating in the complaint investigation process.

If the allegation is against one's administrator or supervisor, that person's supervisor shall respond to the complaint (see Attachment D, Workplace Violence Complaint Form).



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AUTHORITY: This is a policy of the Superintendent of Schools. The following legal authorities are applied in this policy:

California Education Code §44932 et seq. and California Penal Code §422 et seq.

RELATED RESOURCES: BUL-999.4, *Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) For District Computer Systems*, dated June 1, 2009

BUL-1077.1, *Information Protection Policy*, dated December 5, 2006

BUL-1347.2, *Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements*, dated June 30, 2011

BUL-1893.1, *Sexual Harassment Policy (Employee-to-Employee)*, dated August 1, 2005

BUL-2047.0, *Responding to and Reporting Hate-Motivated Incidents and Crimes*, dated October 10, 2005

BUL-3349.0, *Sexual Harassment Policy (Student-to-Student, Adult-to-Student, and Student-to-Adult)*, dated November 29, 2006

BUL-3357.1 *Employee-to-Student Sexual Abuse and Related Discipline Policy*, dated November 13, 2008

BUL-5159.1, *Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP)*, dated July 1, 2011

BUL – 5167.0, *Code of Conduct with Students – Distribution and Dissemination Requirement Policy*

BUL-5212.0, *Bullying and Hazing Policy (Student-to-Student, Adult-to-Student, and Student-to-Adult)*, dated August 27, 2010

BUL-5610.0, *Workplace Violence, Bullying and Threats (Adult-to-Adult)*, dated September 30, 2011

Employee Code of Ethics, LAUSD Ethics Office, dated February 2003

Los Angeles Unified School District Board Resolution, Respectful Treatment of All Persons, passed October 10, 1988



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ASSISTANCE: For assistance and information, please contact any of the following offices:

LAUSD RESOURCES

Communications Office (213) 241-6766 - for assistance with obtaining approval to use district logos and general district communication

Crisis Counseling and Intervention Service, School Mental Health (213) 241-2174 or (213) 241-3841 - for assistance with threat assessments and mental health issues

Equal Opportunity Section (213) 241-7685 - for assistance with alleged adult-to-adult discrimination and sexual harassment complaints

Employee Relations (213) 241-6591 - for assistance with employee records and personnel files

Human Relations, Diversity and Equity (213) 241-5337 - for assistance with issues of bullying, cyber-bullying, conflict resolution, and diversity trainings

Information Technology (213) 241-4906 - for assistance with identifying and establishing appropriate educational websites

Los Angeles School Police Department (213) 625-6631 - for assistance with any law enforcement matters

Office of General Counsel (213) 241-7600 - for assistance/consultation regarding legal issues

School Operations Division (213) 241-5337 – for assistance in school operations and procedures concerning students and employees

Staff Relations (213) 241-6056 - for assistance with employee disciplinary action