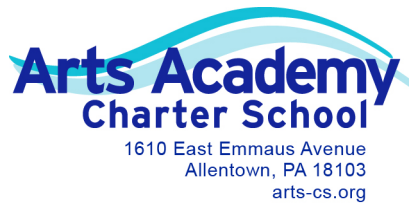


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**Board Policy 9.2.2**

## Employee Use of Social Media

The Board recognizes that the use of social media has become an important tool in the lives of employees, students and the general population. The Board also recognizes, however, that social media poses inherent risks and dangers. The Board encourages employees to use social media responsibly.

**Definitions**

**School-Sponsored Social Media Site** – A social media site formally created by the school with the specific approval of the Executive Director and Building Principal.

**Social Media** – The term “social media,” for the purposes of this Policy, includes all web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public, semi-public or private profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections made by others within the system. Such sites include Facebook and MySpace. The term shall also expressly include all other interactive websites, such as blog sites and microblogs (such as Twitter), virtual worlds (World of Warcraft, Second Life), video/audio/photo sharing sites (such as Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, photo upload sites, etc.), instant messaging, podcasts, chat rooms and other interactive online forums. This term shall also expressly include all non-school email accounts and sites as well as all electronic text messaging, whether phone or internet-based. This term expressly excludes collaborative websites that are contained within the school’s web domain (nwlsd.org) or school-sponsored collaboration sites for which the building or school administration has approved and has provided assurance, in writing, that the site does not permit collaboration by members of the public outside of the school, meets the safety and quality standards and requirements set forth in this Policy and satisfactorily meets the standards set forth in Bd. Pol. 815.4, related to the school’s own website.

**Students** – In this Policy, this term refers to individuals who are currently students in the school.

**Policy Requirements**

School employees are required to comply with all AACS policies, including Bd. Pol. 9.12 – Acceptable Use of the Internet and school Network.

Employees are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Posts, chats, sharing, and messaging may be monitored. Employees should be careful not to share personally-identifying information online.

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### **Communication with Students**

All personal communications with students must be of a professional nature. Employees must maintain strict professional boundaries of communication with students. With the exception of employees and immediate family members who are students of the school, employees are prohibited from “friending” students, allowing students access to the employee’s non-public personal pages, or using social networking media to enter into communications with students. The school takes personal/professional boundary limits with students very seriously and will take disciplinary action against any employee who violates this policy and/or who initiates or maintains inappropriate personal communications and/or a personal relationship with a student through any means, including social networking.

The school recommends that faculty and staff take all necessary steps to limit access to their personal social networking media and prevent students from obtaining such access. Faculty/staff members are reminded that, due to the nature of the technology, individuals do not have an expectation of privacy on social media sites.

### **Social Media Prohibitions**

Employees May Not:

- Utilize private social media sites to communicate with students unless such students are members of the employee’s immediate family.
- Enter into inappropriate communications/relationships with students via social media websites or other electronic means;
- Publish materials, images, or other media that reflects or describes conduct unbecoming of a teacher or degrades professional standards.
- Access personal social networking media on school technology, during the school day or while representing the school at school-sponsored events;
- Post or share information on a public site that discusses or portrays sex, nudity, alcohol or drug use or other behaviors associated with the staff member's private life that would be inappropriate to discuss with a student at school;
- Post or share personally identifiable information about students;
- Disclose personally identifiable information about co-workers or supervisors;
- Post or share discriminatory or defamatory information;
- Post or share comments that would cause a disruption in the educational environment;
- Use or display their professional school email address in any personal social networking media;
- Use school letterhead or logo, or any other copyrighted school information in any Internet posting without authorization from the Superintendent or his/her designee;
- Suggest in any personal social networking context that the employee/faculty member in any way represents the school or is speaking on behalf of the school;
- Act in a matter that creates a false impression that the individual is communicating on

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behalf of, or as a representative of, the school;

- Establish a social networking media site or other online account that purports or otherwise appears to be a social media site or account endorsed by, created by or in any way affiliated with the school without the permission of the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- Violate the school’s Acceptable Use Policies (Bd. Pol. Section 9.1); or
- Violate any school policy on a social media site, including the school’s policies on discrimination, harassment, privacy, bullying.

### **School-Sponsored Social Media**

The school, through the formal approval of the Executive Director and Building Principal, may establish social media sites formally designated as “school-sponsored” sites. Both the Building Principal and the Executive Director shall retain the password and access abilities of such sites at all times. Faculty members may be directed and/or permitted to utilize school-sponsored social media sites. Faculty member use of the sites must be in accordance with this Policy.

At no time may a faculty member have the only password and/or access to any School-Sponsored social media site.

### **Use of Personal Social Media for Professional/Educational Communications Prohibited**

Using personal social media sites for professional/educational communications with students (i.e., school-related communications), is prohibited. If a teacher or other faculty or staff member wishes to use electronic means to communicate directly with students for educational purposes (homework/project reminders or assistance, school-sponsored event reminders, etc.), he/she may utilize either a school-sponsored social media site or another an appropriate professional medium, such as direct emails from the faculty member’s school-appointed email address and/or postings on a non-interactive school-sponsored website. Use of such electronic media shall be restricted to appropriate professional uses only. Faculty and/or staff members may not engage in personal and/or inappropriate communication with students.

### **Prohibition of Required Use of Social Media by Students for Assignments/Projects**

Teachers are not permitted to require a student’s use of social media within the educational program without prior written permission by the building principal and without following the requirements of this Policy. Where social media is utilized in the classroom, pursuant to this Policy, parents and/or students must always be afforded the right to opt-out of such use and receive an alternate assignment.

### **Use of School-Sponsored Social Media by Faculty for General Purposes**

To seek permission to use School-Sponsored social media for general purposes, such as to promote an event, provide information to large groups of students and/or parents, or to promote community awareness activities, a faculty member must submit, in writing, a formal request to the Building Principal, which shall include:

- A description of the nature and anticipated duration of the use;

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- Certification that the faculty member shall not engage in any chat functions with individual students on the social media site;
- Certification that the faculty member has read and understood this Policy as well as the school's Acceptable Use policies under Section 9.1 of the school's policy manual.

The Building Principal may grant or deny such request. All granted requests must include a specific date wherein the permission expires and must be re-obtained through these procedures.

### **Use of School-Sponsored Social Media by Faculty for Use as Part of the Educational Program**

Requests for permission to use social media within the educational program must be made in writing to the building principal. Such requests for permission must include:

1. A detailed description of the project and why the use social media is necessary;
2. The amount of time, not to exceed one school year, that the project will require social media use;
3. The specific classes/students involved in the project;
4. A copy of the informational sheet regarding the program that will go out to parents and on which parents may opt their students out of the program, which must include:
  - a. A detailed description of the project, including the specific social media sites to be used as well as the nature and extent of the student's social media requirements;
  - b. An opt-out provision giving all parents and students the right to opt out of the project and seek an alternate assignment;
  - c. A pre-approved disclaimer indicating that, while the school will do its utmost in protecting the students by enforcing its policies regarding acceptable use and online bullying/harassment, it cannot ensure a student's online safety and/or security when using social media sites to which the school may have no access. Use of social media at home should be supervised by parents. Where this is not possible, parents should opt out of the program and seek to have an alternate assignment for their students.
5. A description of the alternate assignments for those students who have opted out of the program.

Permission granted as a result of such application must be made in writing and must contain an effective start and end date for the project. An employee permitted to undertake such a project may not interact with students using his/her personal social media profile/site. He/she must create a professional profile using his/her surname only ("Mr. Smith"), and the username, password and any other necessary logon information must be submitted to the building principal. Such site may be used only for the limited duration of the project, as indicated in the written permission.

If such a project is approved, the faculty member overseeing the project must send the pre-approved informational sheet to the parents of all students involved in the project, informing the

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Parent of the nature of the assignment and their right to choose an alternate assignment.

**Violations of Policy**

Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including suspension or termination of employment.