

**I. PURPOSE**

The Skyline Math and Science Academy (SMSA) recognizes that social media have become increasingly used for communication among families, students, staff and the community. The goal for SMSA is to embrace this valuable avenue of communication and engagement in order to serve our students better while addressing the expectations for using these powerful tools responsibly in an ever-changing environment. The purpose of this policy is to guide professional, educational and private use of social media for the school, students and staff.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

A. “Social media” are defined as any facility for online (internet-based) publication and commentary including, but not limited to:

1. Websites,
2. Web logs (blogs),
3. Wikis,
4. Social Networks,
5. Online Forums,
6. Virtual worlds,
7. Chat rooms
8. Any other interactive social media generally available to the public on the internet

B. “SMSA-approved, password protected online social media” are interactive media within Skyline’s electronic technologies network for which the School Leader and/or staff has approved for educational use, including but not limited to shared Google Drive accounts.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The following social media procedures and guidelines must be maintained to ensure the privacy, respect and dignity of SMSA families, students, employees, volunteers, and of SMSA. SMSA considers social media as an extension of face-to-face communication, but should not replace completely face-to-face relationships, which are highly valued by SMSA. SMSA employees and students are expected to follow respectful and dignified online behavior and to understand and follow applicable SMSA policies (listed at the end of the document), the Family Handbook and the Employee Handbook when using social media. All social media use, including postings, displays or communications, must comply with all state and federal laws.

### **III. POLICY EXPECTATIONS FOR OFFICIAL SMSA USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- A. Only those public online social media accounts approved by SMSA may use the SMSA name and logo or otherwise present an image in words or visual images that purports to identify the social media account with SMSA.
- B. The School Leader is authorized to establish public online social media accounts on behalf of SMSA for the purpose of informing the public generally and specifically regarding school messages.
- C. The School Leader, with the consent of the staff, may authorize establishment and use of public online social media accounts by teachers for educational uses for their classes.
- D. For each established and authorized public online social media account a school employee shall be designated as the site manager. Any security, log-in credentials, or passwords for such accounts must be shared with the School Leader.
- E. A live link to approved social media sites created under this policy may be placed on the school website.
- F. Sites created under this policy must comply with the school's Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy (524).
- G. Sites created hereunder, and the employees or contractors who manage them, must comply with the social media's rules for civil discourse and adhere to any age restrictions established by the social media owner.

### **IV. POLICY EXPECTATIONS FOR EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- A. Teachers and staff must use SMSA-approved, password protected online social media for educational or activity purposes, as these sources are within SMSA's ability to filter content and access, and allow the school to exercise greater authority to protect students from inappropriate content and to limit public access within these forums.
- B. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the school, post comments as representative of the school, or make statements that can be construed as establishing the school's official position or policy on any particular issue, except as authorized by the School Leader.

- C. The decision to make personal use of social media is at the discretion of each employee.
- D. Employees should not use their school email address for communications on social media networks unless approved by the School Leader.
- E. Employees should not access or use social media for personal purposes during school time, except during breaks, unless they have secured prior authorization to do so.
- F. Employees should take care not to divulge private student or personnel data, or to disclose enough information to constitute an unintentional divulgence of private data.
- G. SMSA encourages employees to resolve workplace grievances internally using established problem resolution procedures. Concerns that are expressed only to coworkers or to persons outside SMSA are not likely to be given the attention that they deserve and may violate confidentiality considerations.
- H. SMSA encourages employees to refrain from posting comments and materials that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or that could create a hostile environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law.
- I. SMSA may take appropriate responsive action if it becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects, conduct or communication on a social media site that violates the Employee Handbook or applicable SMSA policies with regard to other employees or students.

**V. POLICY EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- A. When using social media at school for educational purposes or at home for personal use, students are expected to follow the same behavior they are expected to follow in person.
- B. The decision to make personal use of social media is at the discretion of each student's family.
- C. Students should not access or use social media for personal purposes during school time, unless they have secured prior authorization from school staff to do so.
- D. SMSA may take appropriate responsive action if it becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects, conduct or communication on a social media site that violates the Family Handbook or applicable SMSA policies with regard to other employees or students, to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts student learning or the school environment.

- E. Students should assist the school staff in maintaining a safe and supportive school environment for all students by:
1. Refraining from verbal assaults or verbally abusive behavior including, but not limited to, the use of language that is discriminatory, abusive, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or that degrades other people;
  2. Refraining from inappropriate, abusive, threatening, or demeaning actions based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation;
- F. Students should recognize and respect the rights of others when on social media.
- G. Students should respect and maintain the school's property and the property of others, which includes the school's network and electronic equipment.
- H. Students should avoid inaccuracies in online student newspapers and publications (which are forms of social media) and refrain from indecent or obscene language.

## VI. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The School Leader is authorized to make known regulations for the implementation of this policy.
- B. The School Leader may establish required training for users of public online social media.

## VII. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE (These recommendations are taken from [StaySafeOnline.org](http://StaySafeOnline.org).)

- **PRIVACY AND SECURITY SETTINGS EXIST FOR A REASON:** Learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks. They are there to help you control who sees what you post and manage your online experience in a positive way.
- **ONCE POSTED, ALWAYS POSTED:** Protect your reputation on social networks. What you post online stays online; once you put it out onto the Internet – it always stays out there, even after you delete it (stays on the servers and electronic equipment owned by the social media companies like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). Think twice before posting pictures you wouldn't want your parents or future employers to see. Recent research found that 70% of job recruiters rejected candidates based on information they found online.
- **KEEP PERSONAL INFO PERSONAL:** Be cautious about how much personal information you provide on social networking sites. The more information you post, the easier it may be for a hacker or someone else to use that information to steal your identity, access your data, or commit other crimes such as stalking.

- **KNOW AND MANAGE YOUR FRIENDS:** Social networks can be used for a variety of purposes. Some of the fun is creating a large pool of friends from many aspects of your life. That doesn't mean all friends are created equal. Use tools to manage the information you share with friends in different groups or even have multiple online pages. If you're trying to create a public persona as a blogger or expert, create an open profile or a "fan" page that encourages broad participation and limits personal information. Use your personal profile to keep your real friends (the ones you know and trust) more synched up with your daily life.
- **BE HONEST IF YOU'RE UNCOMFORTABLE:** If a friend posts something about you that makes you uncomfortable or you think is inappropriate, let them know. Likewise, stay open-minded if a friend approaches you because something you've posted makes him or her uncomfortable. People have different tolerances for how much the world knows about them; respect those differences.
- **KNOW WHAT ACTION TO TAKE:** If someone is harassing or threatening you, remove them from your friends list, block them, and report them to the site administrator. Let a trusted adult know, as they can help you figure out if any additional steps should be taken: contacting your school, their parents, and/or police in some cases. It's important to let a trusted adult know what is happening, so you can get support and help if needed, in case the person doesn't stop.

**Legal References:** 15 U.S.C. § 6501 *et seq.* Children's Online Privacy Protection Act  
 20 U.S.C. § 6751 *et seq.* Enhancing Education through Technology Act of 2001  
 47 U.S.C. § 254 Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA)  
 47 C.F.R. § 54.520 FCC rules implementing CIPA  
 Minn. Stat. § 121A.0695 School Board Policy; Prohibiting Intimidation and Bullying  
 Minn. Stat. § 125B.15 Internet Access for Students  
 Minn. Stat. § 125B.26 Telecommunications/Internet Access Equity Act  
 Minn. Stat. § 8700.7500 Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers

**Cross References:**  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Policy 406 – Public and Private Personnel Data  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Policy 413 – Harassment and Violence Prohibition: Protected Classes  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Policy 414 – Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Policy 506 – Student Discipline  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Policy 514 – Bullying Prohibition Policy  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Policy 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Policy 524 – Internet Use and Safety  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Family Handbook  
 Skyline Math and Science Academy Employee Handbook

<http://www.emspring.com/sites/default/files/Sample-Legis-Brief-NLRB-Guidelines-for-Acceptable-Social-Media-Policies.pdf>

Adopted: 3.25.24

Reviewed: