

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**6.51**

**6.5.1 Personal Responsibility**

Henry County School Board employees are personally responsible for the hosted content they post/publish online. Employees are prohibited from engaging in criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct or other conduct prejudicial to the system at any time. This applies to all photos, videos, and messages that employees post on their personal social media accounts, whether they are work-related or not. Employees are to be mindful what is posted/published on social media outlets will be public for a long time and much consideration should be given to privacy protection. It is the expectation of the Henry County School Board that employees' online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, consideration, and decorum that is expected within the fulfillment of one's job duties. Employees are encouraged to view their social media presence as an extension to their professional career and classroom.

Employees are to refrain from posting/publishing photos or movies of fellow employees without their permission. Furthermore, photos or movies taken at school should not be posted/published without permission and must only be posted on an approved Henry County Schools district, school, or teacher page/platform. Posting of such events on personal social media pages/platforms is prohibited. Photos or movies that contain students may only be posted/published with parental consent.

**6.5.2 Personal use of social networking site, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**

Comments made by employees on social media outlets related to Henry County Schools, its employees, students, and events related to Henry County Schools should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, employees should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain regardless of privacy settings. Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect positively on your professionalism.

Caution should be given to posts involving tobacco use or excessive alcohol consumption. Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate.

Henry County School Board employees are advised to be cautious in soliciting or accepting "Friend" requests from enrolled Henry County Schools students on any personal social media account. Employees are further advised that their communication with the student should adhere to applicable laws and School Board policy as it relates to student and teacher communication.

Henry County School employees who choose to utilize Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other social media platform to provide classroom information to students and parents must create a "teacher page" where posts are exclusively about classroom or school activities. The superintendent will create procedures that will establish expectations for teacher pages/platforms.

Employees who post information on Facebook, Twitter, or other similar websites that include inappropriate personal information such as, but not limited to: provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, excessive use of alcohol, or drugs must understand that if students, parents or other employees obtain access to such information, their case will be investigated by school and district

## **CHAPTER 6.00 – HUMAN RESOURCES**

officials and if warranted, will be disciplined up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the offense, and may have their case forwarded to the appropriate state department for review and possible further sanctions. Furthermore, any social media post or presence that causes an interruption to the instructional program will also be investigated.

The Superintendent or designee reserve the right to periodically conduct Internet searches to determine if employees have posted inappropriate materials online. If inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the Superintendent's designees will download the offensive material and promptly bring misconduct to the attention of the Superintendent.

### **6.5.3 Staff-Student Relations**

Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to: employees fraternizing or communicating with students as if employees and students were peers such as writing personal letters or emails; texting students; calling students on cell phones or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework or class work; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students to do the same (other than professional counseling by a school counselor); and engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the Internet or in writing.

#### **Consequences for Violation of This Policy :**

Failure to comply with the above-noted expectations may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal. Further, it is the belief and expectation of the Henry County Board of Education that educators have and employ ethical behavior, and as such, have devotion to the job, the profession, the students, other employees and to the School System as a whole.

#### **REFERENCES:**

**CODE OF ALABAMA No. 2018-528, Ala. Code § 16-1-51.1 (1975)**

#### **HISTORY:**

**ADOPTED: OCTOBER 8, 2020**

**FORMERLY: NEW**