



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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### POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Education (hereinafter, “the Department”), recognizes that social media is a valuable tool to facilitate communication both inside and outside the classroom. When used appropriately, social media also supports *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* (building relationships), *Ikpigusugunnarniq Inuuqatiminik* (respecting others), *Tunnganarniq* (being open, welcoming and inclusive), and *Pijitsirniq* (serving the public).

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish a common approach for managing the participation of students and school staff using social media for communication purposes; and
- Provide guidance to school staff on the appropriate use of social media, both professionally and personally.

### PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Social media in schools is respectful of students’ privacy, intellectual property, confidentiality, creativity, and security;
- Social media platforms should be free from rhetoric of hate and discrimination, especially in relation to human rights protections;
- Social media is used to enhance knowledge and learning and build connections among students;
- All eight Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles, particularly *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* (building relationships), *Ikpigusugunnarniq Inuuqatiminik* (respecting others), *Tunnganarniq* (being open, welcoming and inclusive) and *Pijitsirniq* (serving the public) are supported by the proper use of social media in education.

## **APPLICATION / SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students and school staff using social media for communication purposes. It also provides guidelines for the professional and personal use of social media by school staff.

This policy does not in any way limit the authority of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Canadian Copyright Act*, or the *Health and Safety Act*, nor does it replace the established responsibilities of principals and District Education Authorities (DEAs) in the management of schools. This social media policy does not replace or supersede any other policy related to the Nunavut Teachers' Association Collective Agreement and Nunavut Employees Union Collective Agreement.

## **DEFINITIONS**

*Digital citizenship*: Digital citizenship is the norms of appropriate, responsible technology use. It means to demonstrate and practice safe, responsible, and legal use of technology. It is about rights and responsibilities online.

*Personal electronic device*: Personal electronic devices refer to any telecommunications devices that can execute programs, connect to the Internet, or connect to a telecommunications network.

*Personal use*: Personal use refers to the use of a private social media account for non-work related purposes; for example, a teacher creating a personal Facebook account or a private Instagram account.

*Professional use*: Professional use refers to the use of a social media account that has a connection to work-related issues and topics; for example, a teacher creating a social media account to network with other teachers or to share their teaching experience with the general public. Social media accounts that use the Government of Nunavut (GN) or First Class email domain are considered professional social media accounts and are subject to the GN Records Management, Privacy, and Confidentiality regulations.

*School staff*: School staff refers to teaching staff, administrative staff, secretarial staff, custodial staff, and all other individuals employed or hired to assist in the delivery of school programs, but does not include an individual employed by a District Education Authority.

*Social media*: Social media is defined as any interactive network-based tool, excluding email, that allows users to collaborate, create, generate, and distribute content

including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Pinterest, blogs, Internet forums, and wikis.

## **LIST OF AUTHORITATIVE DOCUMENTS**

- *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act;*
- *Acceptable Email and Internet Usage Policy;*
- *Canadian Copyright Act;*
- *Government of Nunavut (GN) Code of Values and Ethics;*
- *Education Act;*
- *Government of Nunavut Social Media Policy;*
- *Health and Safety Act;*
- *Inuit Language Protection Act;*
- *Nunavut Teachers' Association Collective Agreement;*
- *Nunavut Employees Union Collective Agreement;*
- *Official Languages Act; and*
- *Privacy Management Manual.*

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Deputy Minister:* Is accountable to the Minister for the administration of this policy.

*Principal or Designate:* Validates the relevance and utility of the use of social media for communication purposes and approves, in writing, all social media requests from teachers. The principal designates a social media administrator in instances where the school is responsible for managing the social media account and ensures parental approval has been granted for minors to use social media for education related communication.

*Department of Education IT:* Works with the Department of Community and Government Services to configure the GN network content filters to ensure that staff and students can access social media accounts in the classroom. EDU-IT maintains a list of registered school social media accounts as well as usernames and passwords for account administrators. Account passwords will be reset when an individual is removed as an administrator.

*Administrator:* Manages and monitors a social media account to ensure that it is being used for its intended purpose. The administrator is responsible for ATIPP requests. As such, the administrator is responsible for ensuring that content produced during the school year is stored and accessible for ATIPP requests.

It is recommended that at least two administrators are identified for the management of a social media account.

Parent: The parent or guardian must provide written permission for minors to participate in school related social medial activities. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the education of digital citizenship by using the parental guide from Public Safety and Media Smarts.

## PROVISIONS

All social media accounts use must be approved in writing by the school principal or his/her designate and registered with the Department of Education IT unit, including the account name and URL; the name of the account administrator; and contact details of the account administrator.

Social media platforms may be used provided they meet the following criteria:

- Operate within the provisions of the GN Social Media Policy;
- Be authorized by the Department of Community and Government Services;
- Have an account administrator, appointed by the principal, who is responsible for ATIPP requests; and
- All users are informed that materials produced for social media accounts are the property of the school and the Government of Nunavut, and, as such, they are subject to ATIPP regulations.

School staff using the Government of Nunavut email domain for social media account are bound by the *Acceptable Email and Internet Usage Policy* and the *GN Social Media Policy*.

School staff should model ethical and appropriate online behaviour as per the *GN Code of Values and Ethics*.

Teachers using social media must maintain separate personal or professional accounts.

Under no circumstances should teachers use private accounts and e-mail addresses to participate on or administer social media accounts. Private accounts may be subject to information requests under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* when used for GN-related purposes.

Students and school staff should adhere to the *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq Policy* when using social media. Online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that is required in the school and the classroom.

Students and school staff may not speak on behalf of the school or post school-related matters without receiving prior authorization from the principal.

Inappropriate comments and posts, including but not limited to hate speech, discriminatory language, violent content, cyberbullying, sexual content, or images of drugs and alcohol will be deleted and may result in the individual being banned from the social media account or facing further progressive disciplinary action.

Disputes among staff members should be settled privately and not aired publicly on social media. Teachers are encouraged to use established school protocols to resolve any misunderstandings or disputes.

Once the social media account is no longer needed or there are no administrators for the account, the school social media account should be closed or deactivated and all data should be backed up.

### **Maintenance and monitoring**

When creating a social media account, the principal must designate at least one account administrator to monitor the use and interactions between teachers and students.

Designated administrators must have full administrative rights on their school social media account settings and monitor the account whenever possible to ensure that it is being used for its intended purpose and to delete inappropriate posts. Administrators should use professional judgement, as well as refer to the *GN Social Media Policy* and the *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq Policy* when determining if a post is inappropriate.

### **Duty of care**

Account administrators should make it clear to students that the school social media account will not necessarily be monitored outside of school hours, and provide information on what to do if help relating to the social media account is needed during that time.

If a member of the school staff or the account administrator sees a negative post, they must respond in accordance with existing reporting guidelines and policies, up to and including referring the matter to police where necessary.

## **Communication with students**

All online communication between school staff and students must be cordial in nature and related to the purpose of the social media account.

Private online conversations may lead to misunderstandings and professional risk, and are discouraged between school staff and students.

## **Privacy and confidentiality**

Teachers and administrators must maintain appropriate privacy settings and protect the privacy and confidentiality of students.

Teachers, administrators and students are not allowed to disclose any confidential information, personal information, or images without first obtaining written permission from the individual to which the information pertains.

Photos and videos featuring students should not be posted on social media without the permission of the student's parent or guardian. A signed GN media release form is required to shoot or post photos and videos of students on school social media.

Students for whom permission is not provided must be excluded from photos. Teachers are encouraged to make sufficient effort to ensure parents submit GN media release forms to the school.

## **Risk mitigation**

Schools must be aware of the risks associated with using social media. The Department will provide training to schools in this regard. However, it is noted that the following will require consideration before using social media as a tool for enhancing communications related to school-based activities:

- risks and issues regarding public relations (reputation), information management and technology, ATIPP, privacy, legal requirements (liability, protection of copyright, intellectual property, and official languages) that may arise by users accessing the social media channel;
- many social media channels own the content on the user's account once uploaded and may use that content for advertising, promotion, or in any other way it deems fit;

- potential that school, staff and student images, video, and other content posted to social media channels can, and, likely will be, downloaded and re-used in other ways on other channels, altered or re-posted to the same or other sites.

## **Professional and Personal Use of Electronic Devices and Social Media**

**Reminder:** Teachers have the right to free speech when expressing themselves on social media; however, teachers remain bound by the GN's *Code of Values and Ethics* and its provisions on statements made outside the workplace. Teachers may be disciplined if their off-duty online conduct disrupts school operations, or is harmful to the GN's reputation.

There is a natural association between what school staff post on social media and the Department itself. The lines between personal and professional life are blurred online and school staff should be aware that they could be identified as a departmental employee through their online activity.

School staff should be transparent and identify themselves as a Department employee when using social media for professional uses.

School staff should use sound judgement and due care when using personal social media accounts.

School staff should be careful when accepting friend requests from students on other social media platforms that are not related to the activities of the school social media account.

Staff should limit their use of personal electronic devices to conduct personal matters or activity related to the school social media account during class time.

The use of personal electronic devices during class time should not interrupt student learning. This includes text messages noise alerts.

Staff must not use their personal electronic devices to take photos, audio recordings, or videos of students without their knowledge and written consent.

## **PREROGATIVE OF CABINET**

Nothing in this policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take actions respecting the provisions of this policy.

## **SUNSET CLAUSE**

This policy shall be in effect from the date of the signature until September 30, 2020.