

Adopted: February 13, 2014

Revised: March 13, 2023

COMMUNITY OF PEACE ACADEMY POLICY No. 4.8.4 EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

I. PURPOSE

Digital communication and social media platforms can provide a unique means of interaction and education, but it must not be allowed to create unintended and/or improper interactions between staff and students. It is the Community of Peace Academy Board's intention to use these types of electronic interactions as a way to further the goals of the school, while protecting staff members, students, and the school from harmful incidents.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Community of Peace Academy encourages staff use of social media provided it is used in a manner that does not violate state or federal law or school policies and does not create unintended and/or improper interactions between staff and students.

Public social media platforms outside of those sponsored by Community of Peace Academy cannot be used for instruction or for school-sponsored activities without the prior written authorization of the Executive Director or designee and parental consent for student participation on social networks.

When employees choose to join or engage with Community of Peace Academy students, families or fellow employees in a social media context outside of those approved by Community of Peace Academy, they must maintain their professionalism as employees of Community of Peace Academy and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on those networks, including requirements for mandated reporting.

Guidelines

- A. Community of Peace Academy encourages all staff members to maintain active interest and engagement in a wide range of activities, intellectual pursuits, causes, etc., including social, political, religious, and civic-oriented groups and organizations available through the use of social media. At the same time, this must be balanced with Community of Peace Academy's right to manage public digital communications, content, and interactions issued directly or indirectly in its name or on its behalf.

- B. Staff members will establish and maintain appropriate privacy settings of personal content to ensure that posted content does not reflect poorly on Community of Peace Academy or conflict with its educational philosophies in any way.
- C. Staff members posting content indicating or implying a connection to Community of Peace Academy must ensure that those messages reflect Community of Peace Academy in a favorable light.
- D. Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications and interactions (by word, image, or other digital means). Employees must not use obscene, profane or vulgar language on any social media platform or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous or defamatory or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity, or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment or bullying.
- E. Employees must make clear that any views expressed are the employee's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Community of Peace Academy. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for Community of Peace Academy or post comments or content as a representative of Community of Peace Academy except as authorized by the Executive Director or designee.
- F. Employees should not use their Community of Peace Academy email address for communications or interactions on public social media networks that have not been approved by Community of Peace Academy.

Communicating with Other Staff Members

- A. Staff members will use good judgment when making or accepting interaction requests (“friend” or “link” or “connection”) to or from other Community of Peace Academy staff members. Staff members in supervisory positions are discouraged from making “friend” requests with other staff members. This is due to the potential for those staff members to feel awkward or pressured to accept the request thus potentially impacting the work and social relationship.
- B. Staff members will be mindful of not only their own profiles but those of their friends as well. Photographs and comments on the profiles of friends that reflect poorly on the staff member must be considered.

Communicating with Students and Parents

- A. Other than familial relationships, staff members will avoid personal off-duty relationships with students. Staff members should be aware that, even when interacting with students outside of the school environment, these interactions have a direct impact on the professional relationship within the school environment.

- B. Staff members will refrain from sharing personal email addresses with students, text messaging students, using social network sites, or engaging in other similar behavior that might compromise an appropriate and professional relationship in the classroom and within the District.
- C. Staff members are discouraged from making or accepting interaction requests (“friend” or “link” or “connection”) to or from parents of Community of Peace Academy students. Staff members should be aware that, even when interacting with parents outside of the school environment, these interactions have a direct impact on the professional relationship within the school environment.
- D. Staff members will be diligent in maintaining the highest ethical standards when using social media and must ensure that they do not create inappropriate personal relationships with students.

Professional Responsibilities

- A. Staff members must understand that they are responsible for their online presence and are accountable for all written or posted materials and are to exercise good judgment at all times. The permeating and permanent effect of social networking content cannot be overstated.
- B. Confidential information is to be protected at all times and may only be disclosed pursuant to Community of Peace Academy policy or Minnesota statute. Accordingly, no electronic communication, including but not limited to text messages, images, blogs, or social network posting may communicate any confidential information. If a staff member believes that confidential information may have been revealed, he/she is required to notify his/her supervisor immediately.
- C. Staff members will have no expectation of privacy when using online forums. Information posted on or exchanged through social media may be accessed by parents, students, co-workers, and members of the public. Therefore, when communicating via online social media, staff will remember that their conduct represents Community of Peace Academy and any information posted or exchanged should always be in the best interest of serving Community of Peace Academy and its students.
- D. Employees must not post images on any social media network of co-workers without the co-worker’s consent.
- E. Employees must not post images of students on any social media network, except for images of students taken in the public arena such as at sporting events or fine arts performances.
- F. Employees must not post any non-public images of the Community of Peace Academy premises and property, including floor plans.

- G. Staff members will not misrepresent themselves or any part of Community of Peace Academy in any social networking platforms and will not be asked by supervisors or administrators to misrepresent themselves or their position with Community of Peace Academy.
- H. Staff members are not permitted to use official Community of Peace Academy photographs or photographs of students or student property without the written consent of the Executive Director.
- I. Staff members will not use media sites to harass, threaten, libel, malign, defame, disparage or discriminate against members of the school community including but not limited to students, parents and/or guardians, co-workers or the administration or Board. Employees may not write about, post pictures of or otherwise refer to any student, parent and/or guardians, coworkers or administrators without their permission.
- J. Community of Peace Academy recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media representing students or groups within Community of Peace Academy. When any employee chooses to join or engage in these social networking groups, they do so as an employee of Community of Peace Academy. Employees have responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-student relationships at all times and have responsibility for addressing appropriate behavior or activity on these networks. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online.
- K. Non-compliance with this policy will result in disciplinary action, which may lead to termination as described in the Corrective Action and Dismissal section of the Staff Handbook.