

Chapter 3 Operations Management

3.4 Social Media

Policy Statement

The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) recognizes the importance and effectiveness of communication and relationship building using a variety of accepted modalities, including social media.

Social media, when used in a positive manner, has the potential to share information, raise organizational awareness and make important connections with stakeholders.

Like other forms of communication, APSEA's use of social media must meet tests of credibility, privacy, authority, and accountability. The purpose of this policy is to outline expectations of use for APSEA employees and stakeholders and to articulate APSEA's position on organizational social media accounts.

Definitions

APSEA Social Media Account – An account approved by the APSEA Senior Leadership team. The primary purpose of these accounts is to conduct official APSEA business, and these accounts will be overseen by an approved Account Administrator.

Account Administrator – An individual who manages an APSEA social media account and is responsible for the management, coordination, and delivery of these communication services.

Content – Contributions to social media, including but not limited to comments, images, opinions, audio, video, written word, artwork, quotes, and the posts of others. Content can be used (already existing and shared by the poster) or created (an original expression or work made and shared by the poster). It is the responsibility of the poster to ensure they follow applicable laws (e.g., privacy and copyright legislation) and policies when they contribute content to social media.

Department – A division of APSEA responsible for dealing with a particular area of activity or expertise, with its own designated group of employees.

Director – An employee whose terms of employment include presiding over a department.

Employee – A person whose terms and conditions are set out in accordance with a contractual agreement of employment with APSEA, as well as other direct employees performing work for APSEA and other designated positions.

Personal Use – Use by an employee on a personal account for purposes unrelated to APSEA and official use.

Poster – A person who contributes content to any form of social media.

Official Use – Use for APSEA purposes such as communication, advertising, service delivery, collaboration, teaching, learning and other purposes within the scope of APSEA’s mandate, including as a designated spokesperson for APSEA or by an individual performing activities as part of official duties.

Social Media – The online technologies and practices that are used to share stories, information, opinions, host conversations and build relationships. It can involve a variety of formats, including text, pictures, video, audio, links, and real-time dialogues. Examples of current social media forums include, but are not limited to, X, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Social media is not specific to any tool or platform; it is about an interactive use of the internet. All APSEA social media accounts must have an Account Administrator.

Supervisor – An employee who is accountable for a specific subset of operations within a department.

Unofficial Use – Use of social media for purposes that cannot be connected to APSEA. This includes but is not limited to a comment about APSEA by an employee on a personal account, as well as private social media groups established for student, work, or social activities.

Policy Objectives

This policy is established to support APSEA’s use of social media; allowing APSEA to provide better access to information and be proactive in online communication and relationship building.

APSEA will encourage the appropriate and effective official, unofficial, and personal use of social media by APSEA employees. APSEA will provide a framework for the application of its social media policy by providing guidelines for social media use.

All social media use must comply with all applicable laws including but not limited to Canada’s Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL), Competition Act and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act, Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), Human Rights Act, Cyber-Safety Act and Copyright Act.

All official and unofficial use of social media must adhere to APSEA policies and procedures including those related to privacy, records retention, security, respectful workplace, code of conduct, conflict of interest and acceptable use of computers, email, and the internet.

Application

This policy applies to all part-time, full-time, and casual employees of APSEA. The policy also applies to those who undertake work for APSEA while under contract.

Policy Directives

- APSEA social media accounts are the sole property of APSEA.
- All APSEA social media accounts must be approved by the Senior Leadership team.
- APSEA social media accounts are overseen by an Account Administrator, responsible for the management, coordination, and delivery of these communication services.
- Only APSEA social media accounts are permitted to use APSEA's logo or name in account titles and names or any other distinctive word(s) or marking(s) that would lead people to conclude that the account is associated with APSEA.
- If employees who have access to APSEA social media accounts leave their employment with APSEA, access to their accounts will be terminated.
- All APSEA employees using social media shall follow APSEA's Social Media Guidelines.
- Employees are personally responsible for the content they contribute to any form of social media, regardless of when, where, why, or how they do this. All social media use by employees, whether done on the person's own time and using their own equipment, may affect the legitimate interests of APSEA.
- Employees should be aware that content, including but not limited to online comments and posts, should be presumed public, traceable, and permanent. Where employees use APSEA systems or hardware to post anonymously or pseudonymously, they should not assume that APSEA would protect their identity.
- Disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, could result from a failure to follow the requirements set out in this policy and accompanying procedures and guidelines. Any page, post or content that is deemed in violation of this policy, APSEA's social media guidelines or any other APSEA policy, is subject to removal.

Acceptable Use

- If using social media in a work-related capacity, be transparent and identify yourself as an APSEA employee and your role in the organization.
- Employees may use their personal accounts to share news and information about APSEA, provided all communication adheres to APSEA's social media policy and guidelines.
- Employees whose association with APSEA is evident on their personal social media accounts, or who are contributing content that is related to APSEA's functions should make reasonable efforts to ensure that others do not perceive the content as being official APSEA communications or communications made on behalf of APSEA. For example, the poster may include "in my opinion".
- All employees using social media, whether for official or unofficial use, must ensure all activity aligns with APSEA's mission, vision, and guiding principles.

Unacceptable Use (applies to official, unofficial, and personal use)

- Personal social media accounts shall not be used to conduct official APSEA business.
- Employees shall not make partisan, political comments while communicating on social media as an APSEA employee. Comments must be objective in nature. Do not refer or link to websites or social media accounts of politicians or political parties.
- Employees must not use social media in ways that violate or contradict any law, APSEA policy or procedure.
- Employees must not use social media to disseminate harassing, abusive, malicious, sexually explicit, threatening, intimidating or illegal information or images or make defamatory comments.
- Employees must not use social media to disparage their employer, co-workers, or students. This includes contributing content that would bring APSEA, its employees or students into disrepute or harm their standing in the community.
- Employees must not post/share misleading endorsements of APSEA. If employees wish to make an endorsement, they must disclose their role as an employee and make it clear that the endorsement is personal.
- Employees must not disclose confidential information on social media.

- Employees must ensure consent is provided before posting photographs, video or other recordings of any students or colleagues via social media, in accordance with all applicable APSEA policies.

Accountability

All APSEA Employees

APSEA employees are responsible to understand and follow all APSEA policies, procedures and guidelines related to the official, unofficial, and personal use of social media, both directly and indirectly.

Superintendent/Directors/Supervisors

As members of the management team, these individuals are responsible for implementing APSEA's social media policy and applicable procedures and guidelines. Members of the management team will take reasonable measures to bring this policy to the attention of all employees and to ensure directives are being followed.

Any known instances of non-compliance with APSEA's social media policy will be addressed. Given APSEA's scope, some violations may go unnoticed. Employees should be aware that this does not mean APSEA condones unacceptable use.

Monitoring

- The Superintendent of APSEA or their designate will review this policy annually.

References

- Social Media Guidelines
- 3.2 Acceptable Use of Computers, Email and the Internet Policy (under review)
- 4.3 Respectful Workplaces Policy
- 4.7 Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy
- 4.12 Protection of Privacy Policy

This is an organizational policy designed to supplement other APSEA policies and is not intended to replace or preclude them. If a situation occurs where there is a conflict between application of this policy and any other APSEA policy, the policy most specific to the situation will apply.

Approval Dates

Approved: June 2019
Reviewed/Revised: January 2024