

Adopted: 01-18-2016
Revised: 08/31/2020; 10/14/21

ROCHESTER BEACON ACADEMY- RBA
POLICY No. 522
USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOL

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth expectations regarding student use of social media.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The Board recognizes that social media can be a useful tool for students in the educational process. Safe, caring, and effective learning environments depend on students demonstrating respect for themselves and others and using social media in a manner that will not detract from the learning process.

III. STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. RBA may provide access to designated social media sites deemed appropriate for students, solely for bona fide instructional purposes, on RBA computers, tablets, or other mobile devices. The school's Executive Director shall designate the social media sites deemed appropriate and the names of these sites shall be listed on the RBA website. Where access to designated social media sites is provided, school administration shall have access to and may regulate such use.
- B. Whether the communication occurs on or off school grounds or equipment, RBA prohibits communication(s) by students over social media that do or reasonably can be anticipated to create a hostile educational environment or substantially interfere with another student's educational opportunities, benefits, performance, or with a student's or staff member's physical or psychological well-being, or are threatening or seriously intimidating, or substantially disrupt the school learning environment or the orderly operation of a school.
- C. Student misuse of social media that does or reasonably can be anticipated to create a hostile educational environment or substantially interfere with another student's educational opportunities, benefits, performance, or with a student's or staff member's physical or psychological well-being, or is threatening or seriously intimidating, or substantially disrupts the school learning environment or the orderly

operation of a school shall be subject to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion.

- D. Students shall not use social media to communicate with staff. The school's Executive Director may make exceptions to this rule only where such use is regulated and monitored by school administration and by the students' parents/guardians, and the use is for the purpose of furthering a bona fide RBA educational purpose.
- E. Students shall not accept personal invitations from staff members to use social media. Any staff member extending such an invitation to a student shall be subject to disciplinary consequences, up to and including termination.
- F. Students shall abide by Board Policy, Administrative Regulation, the Student Code of Conduct, and all local, state and federal laws at all times in their use of social media.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Social Media. Any online or Internet based platform that allows interactive communication between persons or entities on social networks, blogs, websites, application software, Internet forums, wikis, and the like.
- B. Misuse of Social Media. Whether on or off school grounds or equipment, the use of social media in a manner that demeans, threatens, condemns, humiliates, or berates others, including students and staff, incites violence of any kind, embarrasses, defames, harasses or bullies others, including students and staff (as "harass" and "bully" are defined by school policy or regulation), or in any manner violates the school Code of Conduct, Board Policy or regulation, or local, state or federal laws.
- C. Staff or Staff Members. Includes any full or part-time employee, extra-curricular coach or advisor, or volunteer of RBA.

V. REPORTING MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. Staff members shall immediately report any misuse of social media to a school administrator for investigation. If the incident involves the safety or security of a student or staff member, law enforcement should be called immediately.
- B. Whenever the misuse of social media involves cyber-bullying, the school administrator should complete the investigation as outlined in the school's policy and regulations on cyber-bullying.
- C. Administrators shall report all incidents of misuse of social media to the school's Executive Director.
- D. If the misuse of social media constitutes a delinquent act, the misuse shall be reported promptly to the responsible law enforcement agency.

- E. Students are encouraged to report the misuse of social media, including communications or invitations to communicate with staff members over social media, to a school administrator.

VI. VIOLATION

- A. Students who violate this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion.
- B. No student who reports the misuse of social media to a school administrator in good faith shall be the subject of reprisal in any manner. If a student believes he or she is the subject of reprisal, the student and/or his or her parent/guardian is encouraged to report the reprisal immediately to the Executive Director.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 124E.03 (Charter Schools – Applicable Law)
Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40 to 121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503 (1969)
Tatro v. Univ. of Minnesota, 800 N.W.2d 811, 816 (Minn. Ct. App. 2011)