

POLICY TITLE: Social Media Use
POLICY NUMBER: 2415

Purpose:

The policy outlines the protocol and procedures for use of social media to publicize District services and events. In addition, this policy addresses the responsibilities of employees and District officials with regard to social media and the use of District resources (time/equipment), as well as responsibilities related to the public records and open meeting laws.

Definitions:

- a) Social Media: Various forms of discussions and information-sharing, including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include: picture-sharing, wall-postings, fan pages, email, instant messaging and music-sharing. Examples of social media applications include but are not limited to Google and Yahoo Groups, Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, Nextdoor, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and news media comment sharing/blogging.
- b) Social Networking: The practice of expanding business and/or social contacts by making connections through web-based applications. This policy focuses on social networking as it relates to the Internet to promote such connections for District business and for employees, elected and appointed officials who are using this medium in the conduct of official District business.
- c) "Posts" or "postings": information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communication posted on a District social media site.

Approved District Accounts:

No district social media account may be created without the approval of the General Manager or his or her designee. All District social media sites created on behalf of the District, by its employees on District time, or using other District resources are the property of the District and shall be administered and regularly monitored by the General Manager or his/her designee. These social media sites shall be used only to inform the public about District business, services and events. Individual departments may not have their own pages/sites. Individual departments wishing to add content to District social media sites may submit a request to the General Manager.

The General Manager or his designee will be responsible for responding to comments and messages on social media as appropriate. The District's web site, <https://www.arfcd.org/>, will remain the location for content regarding District business, services and events. Whenever possible, links within social media formats should direct users to the District web site for more information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the District. Interested parties wishing to interact with these sites will be directed to visit the District's web site for more information on how to participate. Likewise, links to all social media networks to which the District belongs will be listed on the District's website.

District social media sites shall clearly state that such sites are maintained by the District and that the sites comply with this Social Media Policy.

Procedures:

It is the responsibility of employees, and appointed and elected officials to understand the procedures as outlined in this policy.

The District will direct users to the District's web site for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the District. The District may invite others to participate in its social media sites. Such invitations will be based upon the best interests of the District as determined by the General Manager or his or her designee.

Employees who are not designated by the General Manager to access social media sites for District business are prohibited from accessing social media sites utilizing the District computer equipment and/ or the District's web access. While at work, employees who are not granted access via District systems and computing equipment may use personal computing devices and personal web accounts to access social media sites only during non-working hours such as lunch periods and breaks. State law provides that more than occasional or incidental personal use of District resources is a crime.

Appropriate Use of District Social Media:

District employees and appointed and elected officials shall not disclose information about confidential District business on the District's social media sites, personal social media sites, or otherwise. Employee or District confidentiality shall be maintained in accordance with all applicable laws and District policies. If a question arises regarding the use or posting of confidential information on a social media site, the matter shall be referred to the General Manager. The information in question shall not be posted, or if already posted, shall be removed until an opinion is rendered by General Manager or, at his or her request, Legal Counsel.

All content on District social media sites must comply with District web standards, the rules and regulation of the social media site provider, including privacy policies, and applicable law. In particular, District social media posts shall NOT contain any of the following:

- Comments that are not topically related to the information commented upon;
- Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or ballot measures;
- Profane language or content;
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation, or any other category protected by federal, state, or local law;
- Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- Solicitations of commerce;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party. In particular, the District will only post photos for which it has copyright or the owner's permission.

The District reserves the right to remove content that that violates this policy or applicable law from social media sites or profiles that it maintains, including comments posted by third parties in response to a District posting. Participants on the District's social media sites who are in continual violation of the postings/commenting

guidelines may be barred from further use of the District's site.

From time to time, District social media sites may contain content, including but not limited to, advertisements or hyperlinks over which the District has no control. The District does not endorse any hyperlink or advertisement placed on District social media sites by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners. The District will take prompt action to remove content posted by third parties that is in violation of this policy.

The General Manager will determine if a requested use of District social media sites or other District resources is appropriate and complies with this policy. The General Manager reserves the right to restrict or remove District information from a District social media site if the General Manager concludes the information does not serve the best interest of the District.

Record Keeping and Open Meeting Laws:

All use of social media sites by elected and appointed officials shall be in compliance with open meeting laws, which prohibit serial meetings of a majority of the Board or another legislative body of the District via email or other electronic means. Members of the Board, committees and/or legislative bodies shall not respond to, "like", "share", retweet, or otherwise participate in any published postings, or use the platform or any form of electronic communication to respond to, blog or engage in serial meetings, or otherwise discuss, deliberate, or express opinions on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body on which they serve. Employees and elected or appointed officials' posts to non-District social media sites are a reflection of their own views and not necessarily those of the District and should not suggest otherwise.

District social media platforms are subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained on a District social media site that is related to District business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be considered a public record and subject to public disclosure. All postings on District social media sites shall be sent to a District email account and maintained consistently with the Public Records Act, provided, however, that any material removed from a District social media site consistently with this policy shall be considered a preliminary draft, note or memorandum not retained by the District in the ordinary course of business and shall not constitute a public record of the District required to be retained consistently with the District's records retention schedules.

Additional Posting/Commenting Guidelines:

- a) Any posting on behalf of the District shall only reflect the views of the District, and not the personal views or opinions of staff, officers, or other agents of the District.
- b) Postings made by the District to social media sites will be limited to publicly available information or information previously released by the District. The District will not comment on other social media member's sites. Social media postings by District accounts will be done solely on the District's social media sites or in response to postings made on the District's social media sites. Officers, employees and agents of the District representing it on District social media sites shall conduct themselves professionally and in accordance with all District policies. District social media sites shall use authorized District contact information for account set-up, monitoring and access. Personal email accounts or phone numbers may not be used to set up, monitor, or post to a District social media platform.
- c) Chat functions in any social media sites will not be used.
- d) The District reserves the right to terminate any District social media site without notice or to temporarily or permanently suspend access to District social media as to some or all persons at any time. The District reserves the right to implement or remove any functionality of its social media platforms, in the discretion of the General Manager or his or her designee. This includes, but is not limited to, information,

articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communication that can be posted on a District social media platform

- e) District employees will only post to social media platforms only during working hours. After-hours or weekend postings may only be made with prior approval of the General Manager or his or her designee.

The District reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.