

# REGULATION ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Related Entries:** JCCC, JCCA, JCCA-RA, JCC, JCC-RAA

**Responsible Office:** OFFICE OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

## STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### A. PURPOSE

To establish procedures concerning appropriate student conduct when using social media.

### B. BACKGROUND

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports students' use of social media in ways that have a positive impact on the learning environment. Student misuse of social media, whether on or off school grounds, when it creates a hostile, disruptive, or unsafe learning environment, is unacceptable.

### C. DEFINITIONS

1. ***Application Software (App)*** – software used for specific purposes made available through a cellular phone, computer, computer tablet, or other mobile device.
2. ***Cell Phone Misuse*** – the use of a cellular phone, camera phone, video phone, or other mobile device during the school day or during school-sponsored activities that does not align with the rules established by the respective school for such devices, and is used for the purpose of furthering the misuse of social media.
3. ***Cyberbullying (posted in a public forum)*** – the use of information and communication technology email, mobile device, text message, instant messaging, defamatory personal website, personal polling site, or a combination of these to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group with the intention of physically or psychologically intimidating others for the purpose of furthering misuse of social media.
4. ***Electronic Communication*** – any communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, mobile device, computer, or pager for the purpose of furthering misuse of social media.
5. ***Electronic Device Misuse*** – the use of an electronic device, such as a cellular phone, mobile device, computer, or pager, during the school day or during school-sponsored activities that does not align with the rules established by the respective school for such devices. Other electronic devices, including but not limited to, the use of an iPad, iPod, tablet, digital camera, digital highlighter, gaming device, CD player, hand-held game, or use of camera cellular phone or PDA camera to invade the privacy of another

(in locker rooms, restrooms, etc.)

6. **Misuse of Social Media** – the use of social media, whether originating on or off school property, in a manner that demeans, condemns or berates others, including students and staff, incites violence of any kind, embarrasses, defames, harasses, bullies or wrongfully impersonates others, including students and staff (“harass” and “bully” are defined by Regulation JCCA-RA – Bullying/Cyber-bullying/Harassment and Intimidation/Hazing/Bias Behavior), or in any manner that violates the Code of Conduct, Board policies or regulations, or other local, State or federal laws.
7. **Social Media Site** – any electronic, online, or Internet-based platform that allows interactive communication between persons or entities in online communities, including but not limited to, social networks, blogs, websites, application software, Internet forums, and wikis.
8. **Staff or Staff Members** – any AACPS full- or part-time employee, coach, or volunteer coach, or club advisor.

#### **D. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY STUDENTS**

1. AACPS may provide access to designated social media sites deemed appropriate for students, solely for bona fide instructional purposes, on AACPS computers, tablets, or other mobile devices. AACPS, through the Office of the Deputy Superintendent, shall designate the social media sites deemed appropriate, which shall be provided to all schools from time-to-time and listed on the AACPS website. AACPS reserves the right to discontinue access to any designated social media site and/or provide access to additional social media sites as necessary and appropriate for bona fide legitimate instructional purposes for students to use. In instances where access to designated AACPS social media sites is provided, AACPS administration shall have access to and may regulate such use, and shall permit with parental/guardian written consent, communications between staff and students.
2. Student misuse of social media which has a negative and/or severe impact on a school learning environment, or risks the safety of staff and students shall be addressed by AACPS under this regulation.
3. Moreover, student misuse of social media off school grounds which has a nexus to, or has an impact on the normal operations of a school, learning environments, or the safety of students or staff, shall be addressed by AACPS under this regulation.
4. Students may not use social media to communicate with staff except in cases where such use is regulated and monitored by AACPS administration and the students’ parent(s)/guardian(s) for the purpose of furthering a bona fide AACPS educational initiative.
5. Students may not accept personal invitations from staff members to use social media. In exceptional instances, students may communicate with staff or administration where such use is regulated and monitored by AACPS administration and the students’ parent(s)/guardian(s).

6. Students may not jeopardize the safe operation of a bus or the safety of bus occupants by the misuse of social media.

#### **E. REPORTING MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

1. When a staff member becomes aware of an incident that involves the misuse of social media, the staff member shall immediately report the incident to a school administrator who shall notify the Office of Investigations. However, if the incident involves the safety or security of a student or staff member, the staff member shall contact the Office of School Security.
2. If it is determined that the incident is a direct result of cyberbullying, the school administrator shall refer to Regulation JCCA-RA RA – Bullying/Cyberbullying/Harassment and Intimidation/Hazing/Bias Behavior and complete the investigation as outlined therein.
3. Administrators shall report all incidents of the misuse of social media to the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools unless the incident involves the safety or security of a student, in which case the Office of School Security shall be notified for appropriate action.
4. The school administrator or the school administrator's designee shall be aware that some acts pertaining to the misuse of social media could also be delinquent acts. Any delinquent acts, shall be reported promptly to the responsible law enforcement agency.
5. Students are encouraged to report the misuse of social media to AACPS administrators, including communications or invitations to communicate with staff members over social media.
6. Staff shall report the misuse of social media to AACPS administrators, including communications or invitations to communicate with staff members over social media.

#### **F. VIOLATION**

1. Students who violate Policy JCCC – Student Use of Social Media or any provision of this regulation may be subject to discipline up to and including suspension, extended suspension, or expulsion.
2. No student who, in good faith promptly reports the misuse of social media by others to a school administrator shall be the subject of disciplinary reprisal in any manner. If a student believes he or she is the subject of disciplinary reprisal, the student, or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), is encouraged to report such action immediately to the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools. However, a student's report of the student's own misuse of social media may subject the student to discipline.

*Regulation History:* Developed by Superintendent 04/17/13  
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