

3.1a Electronic Communications and Social Media Guidelines

I. Scholar's Academy (SA) supports the use of electronic communications and social media; however, inappropriate use of such communications and media can reflect poorly on the school and the individual and can be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal:

1. Individuals must use appropriate language; use of profanity, vulgarities, abusive or inappropriate language will not be allowed.
2. In any electronic communications that is not used in support of SA education, research and business, individuals must not reveal personal information about others, such as full name, personal address or phone numbers.
3. Individuals should release their own personal identification information with discretion, and only when such release supports a student's education or career development. SA is not responsible for any damages or injuries suffered as the result of any individual releasing personal identification information.
4. According to the North Carolina Public Records Laws, electronic mail ("email") and other like electronic records are considered public records. There are limited exceptions to public disclosure of email communications, which include: emails associated with personnel actions, emails subject to the attorney-client privilege and emails containing information exempt from public disclosure pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"); however, the vast majority of the email traffic generated within SA is a public record. Schools frequently receive public records requests for employee email. When requested, all email, including personal email may be disclosed.
5. Employees are strongly cautioned not make any assumption of privacy when using SA email.

II. The following guidelines are provided to guide employees in making appropriate content choices:

- A. Know and follow Conduct Guidelines as described in the Student and Employee Handbook. Be aware that all laws, policies, regulations and guidelines describing appropriate conduct between employees and students apply to employee conduct on any social network, whether or not the communication occurs while using the Scholars' network or other communications technologies.
- B. Do not link personal web pages and social networking site pages to your faculty/staff page on the school website.
- C. Expect to be held personally responsible for the content published on any social media platform, SA or non-SA. Be mindful that online published content will be available in the public domain for an undetermined period of time, over which users have little or no control. Employees must protect their privacy.
- D. Use name and, when relevant, role at SA when discussing SA or SA-related matters. Write in the first person. Clearly state that content is based on personal opinion and does not represent the position of SA. Forwarding and reposting electronic material and web content distributed by the school is permitted.
- E. When publishing content related to work done for or associated with SA to any website outside of SA use a disclaimer such as: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent SA positions, strategies or opinions."

F. Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.

G. Respect the audience for the website or social media platform. Do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the SA workplace. Show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory; particularly, whether your forwarding, reposting, linking or liking may be considered an endorsement, a critique, or improper encouragement.

H. Find out who else is blogging or publishing on a particular topic and cite them as a reference.

I. Use an authorized SA email account in any communication with students in blogs, wikis or other social networking sites.

III. Scholar's Academy expects all employees to act in a professional and responsible manner at all times. Transmission of material in violation of any federal or state law or regulation or SA policy or regulation is strictly prohibited.

Unacceptable Social Media uses include, but are not limited to, the following types of conduct:

1. Any act that may be harmful to minors including accessing and distributing material that may be harmful to minors;
2. Taking any actions that may disrupt the school network;
3. Knowingly introducing or attempting to introduce viruses or other malware into the network;
4. Unauthorized access ("hacking") into computer systems or networks, including logging into a computer with a SA-issued account and allowing any other individual access. Employees will be responsible for all actions that occur while others are logged into their accounts;
5. Encouraging or committing unlawful acts or using the SA network to promote illegal activities, including accessing gambling, firearms, hate, criminal, pornographic or obscene or terrorism-related sites;
6. Using discriminatory, defamatory, offensive, threatening, intimidating or harassing statements or language, including degrading others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious or political beliefs;
7. Violating copyright laws, including illegally duplicating software or plagiarizing;
8. Accessing proxy avoidance sites;
9. Cyberstalking;
10. Utilizing the SA network to produce social media content for commercial purposes such as operating a business for personal or monetary gain;
11. Providing political or campaign information or lobbying for a political cause or candidate that is not directly connected to an instructional activity or exempted by the Superintendent or designee;
12. Posting a student's photographs or school work on the SA Web site or SA social media platforms without confirming that a *Photo and Video Release* form has been signed by the student's parent(s);

13. Sharing protected or confidential SA information/data with unauthorized persons or for unauthorized purposes;
14. Posting personal information about students or staff without proper authorization;
15. Distributing material protected by trade secret; and
16. Linking social media to SA resulting in use of religious statements in email, including email signatures and/or handles with religious statements.

Adopted: August 7, 2019