

# River City High School

## Social Media Best Practices and Agreement for Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities

In recent years, inappropriate social media use by students has become a problem in schools. In an effort to foster positive student conduct and to deter negative online behavior, we recommend the guidelines below as best practices for students' social media use. For the purposes of this document, 'social media' means any form of electronic communication through which users create profiles, share information, ideas, pictures, video, personal messages, web links, etc., by way of illustration, etc. This includes Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Kik, iMessage, SMS text, etc.

While we respect the right of our students to use social media, it is important for students to exercise caution and recognize appropriate boundaries for their online behavior. Students must understand that what may seem private in the digital world often becomes public, even without their knowledge or consent. Students involved in athletics or other co-curricular activities who use social media must also remember that they are representatives of our school and that any information they post reflects on the entire school community and is subject to the same behavioral standards set forth in the school Student and Athletic Handbooks, the Metropolitan League, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), District Board Policies, and State and Federal Law.

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### Best Practices For Social Media Use

These guidelines are intended to provide a framework for students to conduct themselves safely and responsibly in an online environment.

- 1. Use privacy and security settings; be aware that they are NOT foolproof.** Students are highly encouraged to use privacy and security settings on social media. However, privacy settings have limits and can be complicated. Even if you diligently monitor your privacy settings, it's best to assume that your school, your parents, and strangers can see *anything* you post.
- 2. Avoid posting confidential information.** This includes your birth date, address, phone number, class schedule, bank account information, etc. Remember, once you post something, it becomes property of the social media site or is public domain and is not yours anymore!
- 3. Promote a professional and respectful public profile.** Any information you post is considered public and may be viewed by anyone. be mindful of the image you create for yourself online. Potential employers, college admissions staff, and military recruiters may all request access to any information you post online and can deny you admission or employment if you refuse.
- 4. Avoid Posting Illegal and/or Inappropriate Activities.** This includes videos, photos, or statements depicting violence, hazing, sexual harassment, vandalism, alcohol or drug use, or any other inappropriate or illegal behaviors.
- 5. Be nice online, avoid participating in bullying or harassment.** Remember, our right to free speech is NOT unlimited. Bullying is taken very seriously by law enforcement and school officials. Avoid derogatory or harassing statements about other students, teammates, coaches, staff, and students or representatives of other schools.
- 6. Avoid Cheating and Plagiarizing.** All school academic codes still apply, even online. Cite sources properly.

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### Consequences for Improper Online Actions

While school officials do not monitor students' social media accounts, we *do* have the right to act on third party information and the right to investigate students' social media accounts in the event of allegations of improper conduct. California Education Code provides school administrators with the right to enact school discipline for inappropriate online conduct if

that conduct is: 1.) Substantially or foreseeably disruptive to the school environment; 2.) Lewd, vulgar, or offensive; and/or 3.) Advocating violence or illegal activity. In addition, students should be aware that the kind of online actions described in this section may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

**Examples of these actions include:**

- Profane or sexual language; profane or pornographic content including videos, pictures or links.
- Profane or inappropriate remarks toward teammates, coaches, staff, **students or representatives of other schools;**
- Demeaning statements about or threats toward others, including physical or emotional injury.
- Incriminating photos, videos, links, statements, or language in reference to violence, drug or alcohol use, or bullying.
- Indicating knowledge of an unreported felony;
- Indicating knowledge of an unreported team violation;
- Engaging in cyber bullying or harassment of any student or staff member;
- “Subtweeting” - bullying or harassing someone without naming them specifically;
- “Liking”, “favoriting”, or “retweeting” any posts of the above described actions - this may result in the same consequences listed below as doing so indicates one’s approval of those actions;
- Other inappropriate behavior as deemed by the athletic director or administration.

**In addition to formal school discipline per CA Ed. Code section 48900, consequences for the above-named actions will depend on their severity and nature and may also include any of the following for students participating in athletics and/or co-curricular activities:**

- **Formal Warning.** Student and/or parents/guardians meets with administrator to review this agreement and policies. Coaches are notified. Subsequent violations result in escalation of discipline.
- **Temporary Suspension from participation in events/practices/games/matches.** Duration of suspension will be determined by school administration and will be based on the severity of the violation.
- **Removal from the team or activity for the remainder of the season/year.** Determined by school administration and will be based on the severity of the violation. If the activity involves a scheduled class then the student will be rescheduled in a different class at the earliest possible date. Removal results in the student being unable to participate in any other similar activity or sport for the duration of that season.

*As a student-athlete or co-curricular participant, you will agree to represent your school in the best manner possible, which includes all of your online actions. Your signature below indicates that you have read, understand, and agree to the information in this document.*

Student Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_