Subject: Social Media Guidelines for Staff
Effective Date: TBD Upon Board Approval
Approved By: Board of Directors
Policy: 8007.1

New technologies, such as social networking tools, provide exciting new ways to collaborate and communicate. Nevertheless, school personnel should understand that certain expectations for professional conduct extend into the personal online world of social networking, blogs, and other communication tools, especially regarding any mention of our school or members of the school community.

While Vista Springs Charter School respects the right of employees to use social media and networking sites (such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, etc.) as well as personal websites and blogs, it is important that employees' personal use of these sites does not damage the school's reputation, its employees, or its students or their families. This policy is adopted to ensure online conduct which reflects poorly upon employees, parents, students, or the school may be grounds for disciplinary review or action, up to and including termination.

Employee Guidelines for Use of Social Networking Sites

Acknowledgement and Agreement

The following guidelines are for Springs Charter Schools employees who use online social networking applications including but not limited to Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter which may be frequented by any member of the VSCS community.

1. RESTRICTIONS: If an employee decides to post information on the Internet (i.e., personal blog, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.) that discusses any aspect of his/her workplace activities, the following restrictions apply:

- School equipment, including School computers and electronics systems, may not be used for these purposes.
- Student and employee confidentiality policies must be strictly followed.
- Employees must make clear that the views expressed on the Internet are their own and not those of the School.
- Employees may not use the School's logos, trademarks and/or copyrighted material and are not authorized to speak on the School's behalf.
- Employees are not authorized to publish any confidential or proprietary information maintained by the School.
- Employees are prohibited from making discriminatory, defamatory, libelous or slanderous comments when discussing the School, the employee's supervisors, co-workers and competitors.
- Employees must comply with all School policies, including, but not limited to, rules against unlawful harassment and retaliation.

The School reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any employee whose Internet postings violate this or other School policies.

2. CLASS USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING: New social networking tools and features are being continually introduced which may or may not be appropriate for course or student use. Social networks, even those designed for education, give rise to unique concerns and inherent dangers related to their use. In order to provide healthy, age-appropriate use of social networks, employees are asked to submit all requests for school-sanctioned online social tools to the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities & IT for review.

3. FRIENDING: Accept social network friend requests only with school community members over the age of 18. Do not initiate friend contacts with students at all or former students under the age of 18.

4. UNEQUAL RELATIONSHIPS: Understand that the uneven power dynamics of the school, in which adults and educators have authority over students and former students, supervisors have

authority over subordinates, and Board members have authority over all staff, continues to shape and influence those relationships. Be mindful of those types of relationships and take caution to not cross the line in any given circumstance. Board members and supervisors should not request friend contact with employees as the employees may feel pressured to accept. Board members and supervisors may accept friend requests if initiated by the employee.

5. OTHER FRIENDS: Remind all other members of your network of your position as an VSCS employee whose profile may be accessed by current or former students, and to monitor their posts to your network accordingly. Conversely, be judicious in your postings to all friends' sites, and act immediately to remove any material that may be inappropriate from your site, whether posted by you or someone else.

6. GROUPS IN YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK: Associate with social networking groups consistent with healthy, pro-social activities and the mission and reputation of the school, acting with sensitivity within context of a diverse educational environment in which both students and adults practice tolerance and accept competing views.

7. PRIVACY SETTINGS AND CONTENT: Exercise care with privacy settings and profile content.

- By posting your comments or having online conversations etc. on social media sites, you are broadcasting to the world. Be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings what you 'say' online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum because nothing posted is ever truly private nor does it expire. Be aware that you are responsible for the content you post and that information remains in cyberspace forever.
- Comments related to the school should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, employees should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain. If you see unfavorable opinions, negative comments or criticism about yourself or SCS, do not try to have the post removed or send a written reply that will escalate the situation. Forward this information to the HR Department.
- Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject where possible, and thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.
- Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and by that token an extension of your professional life and your classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on your "wall" - is it really correct to put it online?
- Micro blogging (Twitter, etc.) comments made using such media are not protected by privacy settings as witnessed by the high profile cases in the UK with sports stars being disciplined for tweets expressing personal views. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and again refrain from any comment that could be deemed unprofessional.

8. MISREPRESENTATION: Employees who use social networks should do so using their own name, not a pseudonym or nickname.

9. PUBLIC INFORMATION: Given the open nature of the Internet, and social networks in particular, it would be prudent for SCS employees to use social networks as if none of their content is private, including photos and videos.

10. VIOLATION: Use of social media that in any way violates the school's anti-discrimination policies and/or anti-harassment policies is absolutely prohibited.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of this agreement. If my conduct reflects poorly upon employees, parents, students, or any member of the SCS community, I understand this could be grounds for disciplinary review or action, up to and including termination.

_____ _____

Employee's Name (Please print) Employee's Signature

_____ _____

Date Department/Location

This form must be returned to Human Resources, Springs Charter Schools.

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE REQUIRED