

**MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION  
Section 213**

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA**

**PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for uses of social media that affect MCCS**

---

**A. Introduction**

MCCS, its colleges and centers (hereinafter “MCCS”) encourage its students and employees to use social media tools to advance their work and facilitate the exchange of information. Social media is increasingly used by employees and students to connect with one another and share information, but social media also presents risks and responsibilities. The purpose of this policy is to advise students and employees of some of those risks, and to advise students and employees of their responsibilities when using social media in ways that are school or work related. This policy does not apply to student and employee uses of social media that are not school or work related.

**B. Definition**

For purposes of this policy, “social media” includes all interactive platforms that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to one’s own or someone else’s web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, photo-sharing site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with MCCS. Examples of common platforms for such communications include, but are not limited to, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

**C. Individual Responsibility**

Each student and employee is responsible for their posts, uploads or other communications that are school or work related. For example, employee conduct on social media that adversely affects the job performance of the employee or another employee, or that otherwise adversely affects the students, business affiliates, supporters, or others who work on behalf of MCCS or MCCS’ legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action.

**D. Compliance with Existing Rules**

The same laws, policies, rules and codes of conduct that govern other interactions between students, employees and other college constituents apply to the use of social media. Students and employees who violate these rules may be subject to the loss of MCCS computer and network privileges, and/or other disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or termination. Such rules include, but are not limited to, the following laws, MCCS and/or college polices (hereinafter “rules”):

## **1. Rules for both Students and Employees**

When using social media in ways that are school or work related, students and employees must:

- a. Use MCCS computers and networks responsibly. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 203, Computer and Network Use Policy*;
- b. Not use expression that is not protected by law, such as defamation, incitement to unlawful conduct, imminent threats of actual violence or harm, obscenity, fighting words, gross disobedience of legitimate rules, copyright or trademark violation, criminal or civil harassment, trespass, false advertising, and use of public resources to promote partisan political activities. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 210, Orderly Operations* and *MCCS Policy 211, Political Activities*;
- c. Not engage in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment, threats or intimidation; or that produces unlawful mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule for any member of a college or the System community. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 202, Sexual Harassment* and *MCCS Policy 802, Hazing*;
- d. Respect the copyright, fair use and intellectual property rights of others. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 207* and *Procedure 207.1, Compliance with Copyright*;
- e. Be accurate and complete with their statement of facts; and
- f. Not state an opinion that suggests or implies facts that are not true.

Likewise, students and employees should also not expect any right of privacy to attach to their public postings; remember that posts can be forwarded, copied and readily misconstrued; and that search engines can find posts years after they were created and even after they have been deleted.

## **2. Additional Rules for Employees**

In addition to *subsection 1* above, employees when using social media in ways that are work related must:

- a. Act respectfully and professionally. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 416, Code of Ethics*;

- b. Not post confidential information about MCCS students, employees or alumni; and adhere to all applicable laws or rules governing privacy, confidentiality and internal business-related confidential communications. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 502, FERPA*;
- c. Not use the MCCC or a college name, logo, and other mark without the requisite permission from the System or College. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 602, Names, Marks and Logos*;
- d. Not use personal social media for more than a de minimus amount of time during work hours. See, for example, *MCCS Policy 203, Computer and Network Use Policy*;
- e. Clearly identify their opinions as their own. An employee who chooses to identify him or herself as an MCCC employee on a personal web site, a social networking site, blog, or other social media platform should make clear that he or she is not authorized to speak on behalf of MCCC, and that the views expressed are the individual's and do not necessarily reflect those of MCCC. This should be accomplished by posting a disclaimer such as, "*The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the college or Maine Community College System,*" and
- f. Not use the employee's MCCC email address(es) to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized solely for personal use.

### **3. Additional Rules for Students**

In addition to *subsection 1* above, students who use social media in ways that are school related must comply with the *MCCC Policy 501, Student Code of Conduct*.

## **E. Social Media Sites Sanctioned or Sponsored by MCCC**

### **1. Establishment**

Any social media sites or accounts posted by a college or an entity of MCCC shall be approved by a college president or the System president. Such decisions shall consider whether:

- a. Involvement can be carried out in such a manner that positively supports MCCC's values, missions, and goals;
- b. The engagement with the audience adds value to both MCCC and the audience;

- c. The approach is as effective or efficient as other approaches that might be used (i.e. does an existing M CCS activity, initiative, or social media platform accomplish the same goals?);
- d. The use of social media enables M CCS to offer services it might not otherwise be able to offer; and
- e. Sufficient resources exist to appropriately manage the interactions.

## **2. Management of Social Media Sites Sanctioned or Sponsored by M CCS**

At least one employee shall be designated to monitor the medium, identify problems that emerge, and take action when necessary. The appropriate contributor(s) and/or a sufficient number of contributors with appropriate expertise shall be identified to ensure timeliness and currency of content. Such employees must:

- a. Regularly monitor the site;
- b. Review content for factual, grammatical and spelling errors, and correct promptly any such errors;
- c. Keep all content current; and
- d. Provide timely (typically within two business days) replies to posted questions.

---

REFERENCES: 20-A M.R.S.A. §12706(1) and (11)

DATE ADOPTED: May 3, 2013

DATE(S) AMENDED: