

Social Media Policy — Summary of Key Changes

Proposed October 2026 revision | Comparison with the 2017 policy

OVERVIEW

The proposed Employee Social Media and Online Communication Policy substantially updates the District's 2017 policy. It retains expectations for confidentiality, appropriate workplace conduct, responsible use of District resources, and authorized public communications. The principal change is a clearer distinction among employees' personal expression, work-related misconduct, and statements made officially on BCLD's behalf.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN THE PROPOSED POLICY

- **Employee speech and criticism.** Expressly recognizes employees' rights to speak as private citizens, discuss workplace conditions, and criticize District decisions, subject to applicable law. Replaces broad language about posts harming District interests or disparaging others with conduct-based standards. Embarrassment or disagreement alone is not a disciplinary basis. (Proposed §§ 3–4, 12)
- **Confidentiality and patron privacy.** Retains protections for circulation and library-use information while specifying risks from photographs, screenshots, livestreams, and digital messages. Clarifies that an internal document is not automatically confidential merely because it is internal. (Proposed § 5)
- **Personal social media accounts.** Adds employee privacy protections under Oregon law, including limitations on demands for personal account passwords or private account access, with lawful exceptions. (Proposed § 6)
- **Official District accounts and spokespersons.** Establishes authorization and District control of official accounts, designated administrative oversight, backup access, security and appropriate official messaging. Preserves employees' ability to speak personally to news media. (Proposed § 8)
- **Public commenting and viewpoint neutrality.** Adds a standard requiring moderation of official social media comment spaces consistent with First Amendment requirements; unfavorable criticism is not, by itself, grounds for removal. Calls for written moderation rules. (Proposed § 9)
- **Public records and retention.** Expands the 2017 advisory warning about personal accounts into affirmative responsibilities to preserve District-business records, use authorized channels, and comply with retention and disclosure obligations. (Proposed § 10)
- **New communication technologies.** Addresses digital photography, recording, livestreaming, AI-assisted content, deceptive synthetic media, and disclosure of confidential information to unauthorized AI services. (Proposed § 11)

OTHER NOTABLE REVISIONS

- **Practical personal use.** Retains the rule that personal social media activity must not interfere with duties or patron service, while recognizing authorized breaks and applicable District technology policies. (Proposed § 7)
- **Reporting and enforcement.** Strengthens nonretaliation and specifies contextual review of alleged violations, including available legal protections. (Proposed § 12)
- **Policy governance.** Assigns the Board policy-setting authority and the Director responsibility for implementing procedures, with a formal Board review at least every four years. (Proposed §§ 13–14)

WHAT REMAINS CONSISTENT

The District continues to prohibit unlawful workplace harassment, threats, and unauthorized disclosure of confidential information; expects staff to fulfill assigned duties; regulates use of District resources and official statements; directs official media inquiries to authorized representatives; and prohibits retaliation for protected reporting.

BOARD CONSIDERATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The main policy choice is to affirm robust personal expression while maintaining enforceable standards for workplace conduct and the District’s official communications. Administration should develop separate procedures for account security, content authorization, records capture, and public comment moderation rather than embedding platform-level details in Board policy.