

# Beach District Social Media Position Statement

Social Media has become engrained in today's society. The wide variety of social networking tools presently available provides students easy access to share important news and events with each other. Social media technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro blogging, Wikis, podcasts, photographs, video rating, social bookmarking, and others have many benefits in our world; however, they can also be disruptive when inappropriate social media postings occur. Using these communication tools in an inappropriate manner can have negative consequences, especially if unkind words or threats are used with intent to hurt others.

The Beach District Principals' Association recognizes and supports its student-athletes' and coaches' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. In this context, each student-athlete and coach must remember that participating and competing for the Beach District is a privilege, not a right. The student-athlete and coach represent his or her high school and the Beach District, and therefore, they are expected to portray themselves, their team, and their high school in a positive manner at all times. Any online postings must be consistent with federal and state laws, as well as team, school, school division and Beach District rules and regulations (including those listed below).

Specifically prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Sexually explicit, profane, lewd, indecent, illegal, or defamatory language/actions.
- Derogatory language regarding school personnel or other students.
- Comments designed to harass or bully students and/or school personnel.
- Nude, sexually-oriented, or indecent photos, images or altered pictures.

Also prohibited are all on-campus connections to off-campus violations of the policy.

- Use of school computers to view off-campus postings.
- Students accessing posts at school on their own devices.
- Distribution of hard copies of posts on school property.
- Re-communication on campus of the content of the posts.

**Any authorized or unauthorized use in school or out of school of computer software, computer networks, telecommunications devices, information technology, and related technologies, which disrupts or interferes with the educational process in any manner is prohibited and may result in removal from the team or activity and a recommendation for expulsion.**

*Virginia Code Ann. Sec. 18.2-60 states that any person who knowingly communicates in writing, including an electronically transmitted communication, a threat to kill or do bodily injury to a person or a member of his/her family is guilty of a Class 6 felony. Further, any person who communicates, in writing, including an electronically transmitted communication, a threat to kill or do bodily harm to another person on school grounds or premises, on a school bus or at a school sponsored event is guilty of a Class 6 felony.*

*Virginia Code Ann. Sec. 18.2-152.7 states that "A person is guilty of a crime of personal trespass by computer when he uses a computer or computer network to cause physical injury to an individual."*

*Virginia Code Ann. Sec. 18.2-152.7:1 states that "If any person, with the intent to coerce, intimidate, or harass any person, shall use a computer or computer network to communicate obscene, vulgar, profane, lewd, lascivious, or*

*indecent language, or make any suggestion or proposal of an obscene nature, or threaten any illegal or immoral act, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor."*

[\[S.B. Policies 6-62 and 6-64\]](#) [\[S.B. Regulations 6-62.1 and 6-64.1\]](#) *[Virginia Code Ann. Secs. 18.2-152.7; 18.2-152.7:1.] [Virginia Code Ann. Sec. 18.2-60]*

## **Social Media Guidelines for Student-Athletes**

1. Be careful with how much and what kind of identifying information you post on social networking sites. It is unwise to make available information such as full date of birth, social security number, address, phone number, cell phone numbers, class schedules, bank account information, or details about your daily routine. All of these can facilitate identity theft or stalking. Remember - once posted the information becomes the property of the website.
2. Be aware that potential current and future employers and college admissions offices often access information you place on online social networking sites. Realize that any information you post will provide an image of you to prospective employers and/or schools. The posting is considered public information. Protect yourself by maintaining a self-image that you can be proud of years from now.
3. Be careful in responding to unsolicited emails asking for passwords or PIN numbers. Reputable businesses do not ask for this information online.
4. Do not have a false sense of security about your rights to freedom of speech. Understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited. Social networking sites are NOT a place where you can say and do whatever you want without repercussions.
5. Remember that photos once put on the social network site's server become the property of the site. You may delete the photo from your profile, but it still stays in their server. Internet search engines like Google or Yahoo may still find that image long after you have deleted it from your profile. Think long and hard about what type of photo you want to represent you.

One of the biggest lessons social networking users can learn is that anything you post online enters the public record. High school students should carefully consider their profiles and ask themselves how they would look to a future college admissions officer or potential employer.

Information contained in this document:

- Lee E. Green, J.D. – Baker University, Baldwin City, Kansas.
- Virginia Beach City Public Schools – Code of Student Conduct – Social Networking <http://www.vbschools.com/students/conduct/code.asp>
- St. Thomas Aquinas High School – Social Networking and Athletes – [www.stalux.org/podium/default.aspx?t=141671](http://www.stalux.org/podium/default.aspx?t=141671)  
*St. Thomas Aquinas High School - 197 Dover Point Rd, Dover, NH 03820 - Phone: 603-742-3206 - Fax: 603-749-7822*

*(Adopted 8-14-2012 by the Beach District Principal's Association)*