



Gate City Charter School for the Arts Social Media & Digital Conduct Policy for Staff

Legal & Regulatory Foundations

- NH Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct for Educational Professionals (NH Admin. Rules, Ed 510.01-510.05)
- NH Admin. Code Ed 510.04 — Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology: requires credential holders to consider the impact of consuming, creating, distributing, and communicating information through all technology.
- NH Admin. Code Ed 510.02 — Responsibility to Students: maintaining a professional relationship with students both inside/outside educational settings, and protecting students from harmful conditions.
- NH Revised Statutes § 189:70 — Educational Institution Policies on Social Media: limiting requiring students to provide access to personal social media accounts; protecting student privacy in social media contexts.

Policy Statement

Gate City Charter School for the Arts ("the School") affirms its commitment to upholding the NH Code of Ethics and Ed 510 Code of Conduct for Educators. This policy aims to:

- Protect staff rights including freedom of personal expression.
- Clarify ethical and professional expectations when using social media or digital communication.
- Ensure student safety, privacy, and professional boundaries.

Definitions

- “Credential holder / Educator / Staff”: Any teacher, administrator, volunteer, or employee with a role in the educational program.
- “Official/School-Affiliated Accounts”: Accounts, pages, or platforms managed by the school, or used for communicating school business.
- “Personal Accounts”: Social media / digital media accounts owned and operated by staff in a private/casual capacity.
- “Digital / Electronic Communication”: All use of social media, blogs, email, texting, video, and other electronic mediums.

Staff Protections & Rights

1. Freedom of Personal Speech

- Staff may express personal views in personal/social media contexts; such speech does not automatically violate school ethics or morality codes, provided they are lawful and do not breach confidentiality, safety, or professional boundary norms.
- The School will not monitor personal accounts or require staff to relinquish control or privacy over lawful personal expression.

2. Protection from Harassment or Misuse

- If a staff member is subjected to unjust online criticism, harassment, or misrepresentation related to their professional role, the School will offer support and be prepared to intervene.
- The School recognizes that digital content can be misinterpreted; intent and context matter.

3. Due Process & Fair Treatment

- Any allegation of misconduct must be evaluated in context, considering Ed 510's rules (e.g. Ed 510.04, Ed 510.02).
- Disciplinary action will be proportional, transparent, and offer an opportunity for staff response.

Staff Responsibilities & Ethical Expectations

Aligned with Ed 510 principles, staff are expected to:

1. Maintain Professional Relationships with Students

- Refrain from inappropriate or covert communications with students (see Ed 510.04 re technology use) .
- Do not “friend” or follow current students on personal accounts or engage in private communications via digital means that could be misinterpreted.

2. Use of Official/School-Affiliated Platforms

- Official school social media accounts must be managed by designated personnel.
- Posts must comply with confidentiality laws (FERPA, etc.), school values, and accurate information.
- Clear identification: staff speaking via school channels should represent the school; personal channels should include disclaimers when affiliation might be inferred.

3. Responsible Use of Technology

- Consider the impact of content (creating, sharing) before posting: how will it be perceived? Could it harm a student, the reputation of staff, or the school? Reflect on Ed 510.04.
- Avoid sharing sensitive or confidential student or staff information outside of approved channels.

4. Separating Personal and Professional Spaces

- Clearly distinguish when speaking as a private citizen vs. a school employee.
- Personal views expressed on personal platforms are generally protected, unless they violate confidentiality, are harassing, or threatening

5. Upheld Ethical Conduct

- Even in personal speech, staff should avoid harassment, discrimination, and threatening statements.

Specific Expectations & Examples (Guidance)

Situation	What's Expected / Allowed	What Might Cross the Line
Posting photos/videos of students	Only via official channels, with parental/guardian consent; follow school-approved protocols.	Posting identifiable student images on personal social media without consent.
Communication with students outside of class	Use school-approved platforms; keep content professional.	Private messaging students on personal accounts; content that is personal in nature.
Sharing personal views on social/political issues	On personal accounts, legal and acceptable; consider adding a disclaimer "views are my own".	Using school accounts or implying school endorsement without authorization.
Responding to criticism or online misrepresentation	Request support; avoid escalating; maintain professionalism.	Responding with insulting, derogatory, or unprofessional posts.

Consequences & Procedures

- Violations of this policy will be reviewed in light of NH Ed 510 rules. Not all missteps amount to violations of the Code of Conduct; many may fall under lesser ethics/code of

ethics concerns before formal conduct issues.

- GCCSA shall provide a process for staff to respond to allegations, ensuring fairness.
- Wherever possible, remediation (training, coaching, reflection) is preferred over punitive action, except in serious cases (breach of student safety or confidentiality, harassment, etc.).

Training & Acknowledgment

- Staff will receive annual training on: NH Code of Ethics & Conduct (Ed 510), this policy, and best practices in social media/digital communication.
- New staff will receive the policy during onboarding.
- All staff shall sign an acknowledgment that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by this policy.

Pending BOT Approval October 2025