

	Houston Independent School District Police Department Directives	DIRECTIVE: 420-005
		EFFECTIVE DATE: January 7, 2021
	SUBJECT: Use of Social Media	REVISED DATE: January 14, 2022

POLICY

Information or material posted to the internet or in social media (e.g., Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Web sites, blogs, forums, and message boards) may be considered part of the public domain even if access is restricted, or it may be geotagged. As such, the privacy of the information should not be assumed. Photographs and other material posted to Web sites, social media, or other applications may become the property of that Web site or provider.

While employees can maintain a Web page and make comments or postings on social media, this directive outlines the department's right to regulate the speech and actions of its employees in certain circumstances. This directive applies to all employees.

DEPARTMENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

Only the Chief of Police may approve an official department website or other official department presence on the internet or social media.

The Office of Communications shall exercise oversight of and monitor content on the departmental website and social media channels to ensure the content information and postings are correct and appropriate and ensure adherence to federal, state, and local laws, department policies, and the Houston Independent School District. This includes but is not limited to adherence to copyright and privacy laws, records retention requirements, the Texas Public Information Act, and information security policies established by the department.

Employees who want to establish an official department presence on the internet or social media shall obtain approval from the Chief of Police regarding a social media site proposal.

EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

Employees who post or allow to be posted information or material to the internet, social media, or any publicly accessible communication application or medium are always subject to this directive. Actions taken on or off duty that violate any directive shall be subject to appropriate review and possible disciplinary action.

Employees are not barred from presenting themselves on the internet or social media as Houston Independent School District Police Department employees. However, when posting information or material to the internet or in social media or any publicly accessible communication application or medium, employees shall carefully consider whether or not to identify themselves as employees of the Houston Independent School District Police Department employees or members of law enforcement. Any information posted may remain accessible to the public for an indefinite length of time, even if access is restricted. It may impact open records requests, courtroom credibility, potential citizen contacts, or the ability to seek and

obtain an assignment within the department.

RESTRICTIONS

Except as required by official duties, employees shall not knowingly post or allow to be posted to the internet or in the social media or any publicly accessible communication application or medium:

- a. Photographs or anything depicting or regarding themselves or other employees in compromising or inappropriate locations or circumstances.
- b. Anything that would identify an employee or another person in law enforcement as a coworker, police officer, police employee, or member of law enforcement without permission from that person.
- c. Anything identifying, depicting, or regarding employees or other persons in law enforcement, on or off duty, who work in an undercover capacity.
- d. Anything depicting or regarding an employee without permission from that person.
- e. Anything depicting or regarding departmental or district policy, which would compromise national, local, or employee security or the department mission.
- f. Anything that would produce a reasonable expectation of harm to the reputation of the police department, the district, or any employee.
- g. False, derogatory, offensive, or inappropriate comments, material, or depictions regarding any coworker or other employee.
- h. Anything false, derogatory, offensive, or inappropriate regarding their official duties or any department or district policy.
- i. Anything depicting or regarding an ongoing law enforcement investigation, including investigations that have not resulted in a final adjudication.
- j. Anything that relates to official department activities includes crime scenes, potential evidence, witnesses, incident reports, or personnel performing official duties.
- k. Confidential or privileged information or material made available to them in their capacity as police officers or their position within the police department.
- l. Anything appearing to be officially sanctioned by the police department or the district.

- m. Anything appearing to use an employee's official position for personal profit or business interests, endorse a political candidate, platform, or commercial product, or participate in political activity.
- n. Anything that would attribute personal statements or opinions to the Police Department or the district.

Approved By



Pedro Lopez Jr., Chief of Police