

713 EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Social Media

The district recognizes the prevalence of social media used for personal and educational purposes and acknowledges that its employees have the right under the First Amendment to speak out on matters of public concern. The District promotes all staff to utilize social media tools to teach, communicate, and bring the real world into the classroom. However, the district also has the right to regulate the speech of employees in certain circumstances. Accordingly, it is essential that employees conduct themselves in such a way that their personal or educational use of social media does not adversely affect their position with the district.

The purpose of this regulation is to establish protocols for the use of social media by employees and to outline expectations for its use regardless of whether access to any social media is through a district-owned or personal electronic device. Social media includes but is not limited to: social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, **Snapchat** pages or blogs, educational networking sites and electronic messaging.

Legitimate Educational Purposes

As used in this policy, legitimate educational purposes includes but are not limited to:

1. Answering academic inquiries regarding homework, other classroom work or assignments;
2. Scheduling appointments for school-related conferences and/or extra help;
3. Clarifying classroom expectations and/or assignments;
4. Notifications related to classroom, club or sports schedules, safety, attendance, ^{SEP}events, trips, assignments, and/or deadlines.

Expectations for the use of personal social media - District employees should:

- Refrain from accepting current WCSD students as "friends" on personal social networking sites.
- Set and maintain social networking privacy settings at the most restrictive level.
- Not use a social networking site to discuss students or employees.
- Not post images that include students.
- Limit the use of personal social media sites during working hours.

Expectations for use of educational networking sites - District employees must:

- Use District-provided accounts to create a classroom presence or site for legitimate educational purposes. Social media outlets for educational purposes can be used as long as they use a separate account for personal use.
- Notify your supervisor about the use of any educational network and discuss with your supervisor the need for notification to parents and other employees.
- Use District-supported networking tools when available.
- Have a clear statement of purpose and outcomes for the use of the networking tool.
- Not post images that include students without parental release forms on file.
- Pay close attention to the site's security settings and allow only approved participants access to the site.

Expectations for all networking sites District employees should:

- Not submit or post confidential or protected information about the District, its students, alumni or employees. You should assume that most information about a student is protected from disclosure by both federal law (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and state law (Iowa Code Section 22.7(1)). Disclosures of confidential or protected information may result in liability for invasion of privacy or defamation.
- Report, as required by law, any information found on a social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines.
- Consider whether a particular posting puts your professional reputation and effectiveness as a District employee at risk.
- Refrain from postings that contain content that disrupts the educational program. Examples include, but are not limited to content that:
 1. Is sexually provocative or flirtatious in nature;
 2. Exhibits or advocates for use of drugs and alcohol;
 3. Would be defined by a reasonable person as obscene, racist, or sexist;
 4. Commentary deemed to be defamatory, proprietary, or libelous;
 5. Promotes illicit, illegal, or unethical activity;
 6. Violates the district's affirmative action and/or bullying and harassment policies.

Electronic Communication

Electronic communication includes but is not limited to:

1. Telephone and wireless phone;
2. Text, data, picture, or video messaging;
3. Electronic mail;
4. Electronic chat (via specialized software, Internet, or otherwise);
5. Other direct electronic communication.

Employees are encouraged to contact students and their parents through the school district computer or phone unless in the case of an emergency or with prior consent of the principal. Employees are encouraged to limit the use of personal electronic communication during working hours. If a situation arises where personal use is affecting job performance, it will be addressed directly with the staff member.

Employees, coaches, or sponsors may create a communication group of students and parents in order to communicate more effectively as long as the communication (text, email, etc) go to all students, their parents (if requested), and the supervisor.

Employees must notify supervisors and parents if they intend to communicate with students using these methods and should allow them to be included with the communication. Parents may request their students should not be contacted via electronic communication.

Consequences

Failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct or electronic communication can lead to discipline up to and including suspension and dismissal from employment. When inappropriate use of electronic contacts is suspected, administrators will immediately investigate. Misconduct that rises to the level of criminal activity will be reported to law enforcement. Misconduct that violates professional ethics may be reported to the Board of Educational Examiners.