

PERSONNEL

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EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

I. PURPOSE

The Litchfield Public Schools recognizes the value of teacher inquiry, investigation, and innovation using new technology tools to enhance the learning experience. The District also recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies.

This policy addresses employees' use of publicly available social media networks including: personal Web sites, Web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media. The District takes no position on employees' decision to participate in the use of social media networks for personal use on personal time. However, use of these media for personal use during District time or on District equipment is prohibited. In addition, employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws or District policies.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The District recognizes the importance of online social media networks as a communication and e-learning tool. Toward that end, the District provides password-protected social media tools and District-approved technologies for e-learning and encourages use of District tools for collaboration by employees. However, public social media networks, outside of those sponsored by the District, may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities without the prior authorization of the Superintendent, or designee, and parental consent for student participation on social networks. The District may use these tools and other communication technologies in fulfilling its responsibility for effectively communicating with the general public.

Employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communication that violate state or federal laws or District policies.

The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. However, teachers and students are not friends. Thus, teachers should not "friend" students on their personal social media pages, either. When employees choose to join or engage with District families or fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside those approved by the District, they are advised to maintain their professionalism as District employees and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks, including requirements for mandated reporting.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. ***Public social media networks*** are defined to include: Websites, Weblogs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media generally available to the public or consumers and which do not fall within the District's electronic technologies network (e.g. Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, blog sites, etc.).
- B. ***District approved password-protected social media tools*** are those that fall within the District's electronic technologies network or which the District has approved for educational use. The District has greater authority and responsibility to protect minors from inappropriate content and can limit public access within this limited public forum.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to remember they are role models to students in this community. Because readers of social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the schools and the District, the District requires employees to observe the following rules when referring to the District, its schools, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers and communities on any personal or public social media networks that have not been approved by the District:

- A. An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's postings, displays, or communications on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable District policies.

Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications.

Employees may not use the District logo, District images, or use their District e-mail address for communications on personal or public social media networks that have not been approved by the District.

Employees must make clear that any views expressed are the employee's alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the District. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the District or post comments as a representative of the District, except as authorized by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

When authorized as a spokesperson for the District, employees must disclose their employment relationship with the District.

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Employees may not disclose on any personal social media network any information that is confidential or proprietary to the District, its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy laws.

1. Employees may not post images on any personal social media network of co-workers without the co-workers' consent.
 2. Employees may not post images of students on any personal social media network without written parental consent, except for images of students taken in the public arena, such as at district sporting events or fine arts public performances.
 3. Employees may not post any nonpublic images of the District premises and property, including floor plans.
- B. The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media representing students or groups within the District. When employees, including coaches/advisors, choose to join or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as an employee of the District. Employees have responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-student relationships at all times and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online.
- C. Employees who participate in social media networks may decide to include information about their work with the District as part of their personal social network, as it would relate to a typical social conversation. This may include:
1. Work information included in a personal profile, such as the District name, job title, and job duties.
 2. Status updates regarding an employee's own job promotion,
 3. Personal participation in District-sponsored events, including volunteer activities.
- D. An employee who is responsible for a personal or District social media network posting that fails to comply with the rules and guidelines set forth in this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees will be held responsible for the disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information.
- E. Anything posted on an employee's District Website or Weblog or other school related internet content for which the employee is responsible, will be subject to all District policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines. The District is free to view and monitor an employee's District Website or Weblog at any time. Where applicable, access to

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an employee's District Website or Weblog may be included as part of an employee evaluation.

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Policy Adopted: 1/19/2011
Policy Rewritten: 2/5/2014
Policy Revised: 6/17/2015, 10/5/2016