

PERSONNEL

4118.51(a)

4218.51(a)

Administrative Regulation

SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

District employees are expected to behave honorably in online activities. Activities which are improper, unethical, and illegal or which may cause undue discomfort for students, employees, parents or other members of the school community should be avoided in both physical space and cyberspace. To that end, the following guidelines for school employees who use online social networking applications which may be frequented by current or former students are offered.

Guidelines for the use of social networking sites by professional staff:

1. Do not accept current students as friends on personal social networking sites. Decline student-initiated friend requests.
2. Do not initiate friendships with current students.
3. Remember that people classified as “friends” have the ability to download and share your information with others. Post only what you want the world to see. Imagine your students, their parents, your administrator, visiting your site. It is not like posting something to your web site or blog and then realizing that a story or photo should be taken down. On a social networking site, once you post something it may be available, even after it is removed from the site.
4. Do not discuss students or co-workers or publicly criticize school policies or personnel.
5. Visit your profile’s security and privacy settings. At a minimum, educators should have all privacy settings set to “only friends.” “Friends of Friends” and “Networks and Friends” open your content to a large group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be a risk.
6. Exercise appropriate discretion when using social networks for personal communications with the knowledge that adult behavior on social networks may be used as a model by students.
7. Understand that the uneven power dynamics of the school, in which adults have authority over former students, continues to shape those relationships.
8. Remind all members of your network of your position as an educator whose profile may be accessed by current or former students, and to monitor their posts to your network accordingly. Conversely, be judicious in your postings to all friends’ sites, and act immediately to remove any material that may be inappropriate from your site whether posted by you or someone else.

Guidelines for the use of educational networking sites by professional staff:

1. Let your administrator, fellow teachers and parents know about your educational network.
2. When available, use school-supported networking tools.
3. Do not say or do anything that you would not say or do as a teacher in the classroom. (Remember that all online communications are stored and can be monitored.)

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SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES – (continued)

Guidelines for the use of educational networking sites by professional staff:

4. Have a clear statement of purpose and outcomes for the use of the networking tool.
5. Establish a code of conduct for all network participants.
6. Do not post images that include students without parental release forms on file.
7. Pay close attention to the site's security settings and allow only approved participants access to the site.

Guidelines for all networking sites by professional staff:

1. Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous. Exercise caution with regard to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.
2. Consider whether a particular posting puts your effectiveness as a teacher at risk.
3. Due to security risks, be cautious when installing the external applications that work with the social networking site. Examples of these sites are calendar programs and games.
4. Run updated malware protection to avoid infections of spyware and adware that social networking sites might place on your computer.
5. Be careful not to fall for phishing scams that arrive via email or on your wall, providing a link for you to click, leading to a fake login page.
6. If a staff member learns of information, on the social networking site, that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines they must report it as required by law.