

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION/SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The Ocosta School District Board of Directors recognizes that social media (as defined below) offers new and exciting opportunities to express creativity, share knowledge, build a sense of belonging and community, and engage in ongoing conversations with students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, colleagues, and friends about common interests. At the same time, employee social media can impact the school community and may in some instances disrupt the Ocosta School District's ("District") educational mission. The District encourages employees to consider the impact of social media on the school community. The District also recognizes that school employees have the constitutionally protected right to speak freely as private citizens on matters of public concern, unless the employee's speech causes or can reasonably be expected to cause a substantial disruption to school operations. This policy is intended to provide guidance to school employees about social media use.

Definition

"Social Media" means broadly accessibly internet-based communications platform used to interact with other users and share content among a network. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Flickr, blogs, and Wikis.

Scope

A. Professional Social Media Use

1. The Ocosta School District may approve professional social media sites for employees who wish to communicate with students or parents through those sites.
2. Professional social media sites should address reasonable instructional, education, or extra-curricular program matters. The same standards expected in schools and District professional settings are expected on professional social media sites.
3. **Posting:** Official social media sites need to be clear, precise, and follow industry best practices for posting updates. All content posted to district social media should be:
 - a. **Relevant** – Information that engages residents and pertains to their daily lives.
 - b. **Timely** – Pertains to deadlines, upcoming events, or current news.
 - c. **Actionable** – Prompts residents to take an action.
4. Only those professional social media accounts approved by the District may use the District's name, the name of any of its schools or departments, its mascots or team names, or otherwise present words or images that purport to identify the social media account with the Ocosta School District, its schools, departments, activities, or programs.

B. Personal Social Media Use

1. Employees may not use social media for personal use during work time.
2. The decision of whether or not to use social media for personal use, outside of work hours, is left to the discretion of the individual District employee. The District recognizes that employees have constitutionally protected right to speak as private citizens on matters of public concern.
3. District employees shall not communicate or otherwise disseminate any confidential information they have access to as a result of their employment with the District.

- 4. The District may take appropriate action when it becomes aware of employee conduct or communication on social media that causes or that the District reasonable believes will cause a substantial disruption to the District’s educational operations.
- 5. District employees must never use their school email account in conjunction with personal social media account.
- 6. The District will not take adverse action simply because it disagrees with an employee’s communication on social media, in his or her capacity as a private citizen, and on a matter of public concern.

C. Retention

- 1. Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the District and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to Washington State Public Records laws. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (e.g. digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Ocosta School District shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule.

The Acceptable Use Policy Continues to govern employees, students, and other users’ access to and use of Ocosta School District and network information resources.

Cross References:	Board Policies	2020	Curriculum Development and Adoption of Instructional Materials
		2022	Electronic Resources
		2025	Copyright Compliance
		3207	Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying
		3231	Student Records
		4040	Public Access to District Records
		5281	Disciplinary Action and Discharge

Legal Reference:	18 USC 2520-2522	Electronic Communication Privacy Act Pub. L No. 110-385 Protecting Children in the 21 st Century Act
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Management Resources:	Policy News, February 2012	
	Policy News, June 2008	Electronic Resources
	Policy News, June 2001	Congress Requires Internet Blocking at School
	Policy News, August 1998	Permission Required to Review E-mail

Board Signature:
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