

## STAFF USE OF INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKING AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

### Statement of Philosophy

The District encourages all staff to use 21<sup>st</sup> Century tools to teach, communicate and bring the real world into the classroom. It supports uses of current technology in ways that promote, support, and maintain strong, appropriate relationships between staff and students.

School-provided accounts (like Google e-mail accounts, Google docs, etc) that can be monitored are always the safest means for both student and staff to communicate electronically. To protect all parties, it is important that staff, students and parents understand the boundaries of professional decorum in the use of ever-changing on-line, digital learning possibilities. Staff must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process and in ways that protect students and staff members alike from inappropriate use or the appearance of inappropriate use.

The District's expectation is that staff will use maturity, common sense and sound professional judgment in all interactions with students, parents, and community members.

### Practical Guidelines

1. Staff members should not list or follow current students (except their own children) as "friends", "followers", or equivalent labels on personal networking accounts.
2. Staff members are encouraged to use district-provided accounts to create a classroom presence or site for legitimate educational purposes (separate from personal sites).
3. When a non-school provided tool is used for legitimate educational purposes, the building administrator and district technology director shall upon request be granted full administrative access to the site.
4. All staff electronic contacts (including phone) with students (except their own children) should be through district accounts whenever possible.
5. In the unusual circumstance when use of a personal account is necessary for interaction between staff and students, interactions should be strictly limited in scope, frequency and duration. Prolonged interactions on personal accounts are discouraged and should be terminated or transitioned to school accounts as quickly as possible. "Let's continue this conversation on the school account" is an appropriate transition.
6. All electronic contacts (including phone) by teachers/coaches/sponsors/directors with the class/team or individual class/team members shall be for legitimate education purposes only;

7. Postings that contain content that disrupts the educational program and damages the relationships of trust necessary between students, staff and parents are strictly prohibited.

Examples include but are not limited to content that:

- a. is sexually provocative or flirtatious in nature;
- b. exhibits or advocates for use of drugs and alcohol;
- c. would be defined by a reasonable person as obscene, racist, or sexist;
- d. promotes illicit, illegal or unethical activity;
- e. violates the district's affirmative action and/or bullying and harassment policies.

8. Postings that communicate confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information are prohibited.

9. Postings that cause significant interference with the education program via any electronic means are prohibited.

#### Legitimate Educational Purposes

As used in this policy, legitimate educational purposes include:

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, events, trips, assignments and/or deadlines.

#### Consequences

Failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct 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 will be reported to the Board of Educational Examiners.

#### Implementation

This policy will be contained in the staff handbook and posted on the District web-site.