

## **EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **I. PURPOSE**

Kimball Public Schools recognize the value of teacher inquiry, investigation, and innovation using technology communication tools to enhance the learning experience. Kimball Public Schools also recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these communication tools. This policy addresses employees' use of social media networks including personal web sites, blogs, wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, gaming sites and any other social media.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The District recognizes the importance of online social media networks as communication and learning tools. Toward that end, the district provides, approves, and/or sanctions various social media network applications and provides guidance to employees on the use of social media

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

Social media networks are defined to include: websites, teacher and classroom information associated with the District's learning management system, blogs, wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, gaming and any other social media generally available.

### **IV. USE OF PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA IN INSTRUCTION OR SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

Instructors may use social media for purposes of instruction subject to the following:

1. The instructor shall ensure that a signed Acceptable Use Agreement is on file for each student prior to any access of online social media.
2. The instructor shall ensure that all applicable laws and School Board policy related to data practices, privacy, intellectual property, and publication of student work are followed.
3. The instructor shall ensure that students comply with any applicable terms of use.
4. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee may determine that specific public social media networks shall be available for use in instruction or school-sponsored activities.

## **V. EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL USE OF PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS**

- A. 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 social media networks for personal purposes during working hours is prohibited.
- B. Employees are encouraged to use discretion in social media communications (by word, image, video, or other means). If employees use or support obscene, profane, or vulgar language on any social media network or engage in communications and conduct that are harassing, threatening, discriminatory, bullying, libelous, or defamatory, or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, discrimination, or bullying, this may affect the employee's suitability for employment.
- C. If an employee is identified on a public social media network as an employee of Kimball Public Schools the employee shall 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.
- D. Employees shall not disclose information on any social media network that is private, confidential, non-public, or proprietary in relation to the District, its students, or employees, or that is protected by data practices laws.
- E. Employees may not post images of co-workers on any social media network without the co-worker's consent. Employees may not post images of students on any social media network without written parental consent, except for images of students taken in public arena such as a sporting event or fine arts public performance. Employees may not post details of District facilities, mechanical systems, communications systems, architectural drawings or building layout sketches, security systems, surveillance systems, directories, access codes for hardware or software, or emergency response plans.
- F. The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media networks representing students or groups within the District. When employees, including coaches or advisors, chose to join or engage with these social media network groups, they do so as an employee of the District. Employees have responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-student relationships at all times following district policies and addressing inappropriate behavior or activity in these groups. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online.

- G. An employee who is responsible for a social media network posting that fails to comply with 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, information that violates the privacy rights or other rights of a third party or content of anything they posted on any social media network.
- H. Anything posted on an employee's web site or blog or other 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 Web site or blog at any time without consent, previous approval, or notice. Where applicable, employees may be required to disclose the existence of and access to an employee's web site or blog or other personal social media network as part of an employment selection, hiring, promotion, or disciplinary process.
- I. Employees shall not post any information or engage in communications that violate state or federal laws or District policies.
- J. The line between professional and personal relationships may be blurred within a social media network context. When employees choose to join or engage with District students, families, or fellow employees in a public social media network context, they must maintain their professionalism as District employees, and they have responsibility for addressing inappropriate activity, including requirements for mandated reporting.

## **VI. ANNUAL REVIEW**

- A. This policy will be reviewed annually with all staff.
- B. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Policy Committee of the School Board.

Source: Independent School District No. 739, Kimball, MN

Date: 2015; Reviewed 6/2023