

## **SUBJECT: STAFF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The Board will provide staff with access to various computerized information resources through the District's computer system (DCS) consisting of software, hardware, computer networks, wireless networks/access, and electronic communication systems. This may include access to electronic mail, on-line services, and the Internet. It may also include the opportunity for staff to have independent access to the DCS from their home or other remote locations, and/or to access the DCS from their personal devices. All use of the DCS and the wireless network, including independent use off school premises and use on personal devices, will be subject to this policy and any accompanying regulations.

The Board encourages staff to make use of the DCS to explore educational topics, conduct research, and contact others in the educational world. The Board anticipates that staff access to various computerized information resources will both expedite and enhance the performance of tasks associated with their positions and assignments. To that end, the Board directs the Superintendent or designee(s) to provide staff with training in the proper and effective use of the DCS.

Staff use of the DCS is conditioned upon written agreement by the staff member that use of the DCS will conform to the requirements of this policy and any regulations adopted to ensure acceptable use of the DCS. These agreements will be kept on file in the District Office.

Generally, the same standards of acceptable staff conduct which apply to any aspect of job performance will apply to use of the DCS. Employees are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with applicable District policies and regulations governing the behavior of school staff. Electronic mail and telecommunications will not be utilized to share confidential information about students or other employees.

Access to confidential data is a privilege afforded to District employees in the performance of their duties. Safeguarding this data is a District responsibility that the Board takes very seriously. Consequently, District employment does not automatically guarantee the initial or ongoing ability to use mobile or personal devices to access the DCS and the information it may contain.

This policy does not attempt to articulate all required and/or acceptable uses of the DCS; nor is it the intention of this policy to define all inappropriate usage. Administrative regulations will further define general guidelines of appropriate staff conduct and use as well as proscribed behavior.

District staff will also adhere to the laws, policies, and rules governing computers including, but not limited to, copyright laws, rights of software publishers, license agreements, and rights of privacy protected by federal and state law.

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Staff members who engage in unacceptable use may lose access to the DCS and may be subject to further discipline under the law and in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements. Legal action may be initiated against a staff member who willfully, maliciously, or unlawfully damages or destroys property of the District.

**Social Media Use by Employees**

The District recognizes the values associated with using social media as a communication and learning tool. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish best practices for the District employees regarding the appropriate use of social media tools in their professional lives.

**Definitions**

Social media includes any and all forms of online publication where individuals engage in conversation or posting of written or image information (such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, virtual worlds, messaging sites and social networks). Some of the more familiar social media tools include such online services as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn and TikTok. This list is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive; new social media platforms are continually introduced to the marketplace. The same set of professional expectations applies regardless of the choice of social media.

**Professional Use:** Refers to using social media to advance a program or function of the District as part of an employee's job responsibilities.

**Personal Use:** Refers to the employees using social media to advance themselves personally.

**Personal vs. Professional Use**

The District does not take a position on an employee's decision to participate in the use of social media for personal use on personal time. If, however, employees choose to use social media for personal use on personal time, they should not communicate with students and/or their families regarding topics pertaining to their employment at the Tuxedo Union Free School District that could be considered sensitive, confidential, or disparaging. District provided communication tools such as an employee's school email account, voicemail account and/or district website should be the only means by which you engage students and/or their families in communication pertaining to your employment responsibilities.

All staff are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for the District and as appropriate role models for students. It is important to maintain professionalism in all interactions with students, their families and the community. Failure to do so could put an employee in violation of existing District policy and at risk of disciplinary action.

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Please keep in mind that as a school employee you have a responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity in any forum, including requirements for mandated reporting and compliance with all applicable District policies (e.g. DASA). Employees' online behavior in social media forums must reflect the same standards of professionalism respect and integrity as face-to-face communications.

When using social media for personal use, if you identify yourself as an employee of the Tuxedo Union Free School District, you are by extension associating yourself with the District, your colleagues and our school community; therefore, you must ensure that any associated content is consistent with the mission of the district. Employees who identify themselves as associated with the District should use the following disclaimer on personal social media sites, "The views expressed on this site are my personal opinions and do not necessarily represent the views, opinions, mission or goals of the Tuxedo Union Free School District."

The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media representing students or groups associated with the District. When adults authorized to interact with students (coaches, advisors, volunteers, etc.) choose to join or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as if they were paid employees of the District. All employees are responsible for maintain appropriate employee-student relationships at all times, and have further responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online.

### **1. You are Always a School Employee**

- The lines between public, private, personal and professional can be very blurry in the digital world. Please keep in mind that you will be publicly identified as working for and sometimes representing the district in what you say and do online.
- Always write in the first person and make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the district. If you are speaking on behalf of the district, make sure you have secured prior authorization to do so from the Superintendent.
- Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity or misrepresenting your identity.
- Do not share confidential information about school business, students or your colleagues.

### **2. Be Professional**

- Respect the District's values of respect, responsibility, honesty, integrity, and community service. Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner and consider carefully what you post. Assume that anything you post is public and will be viewed by everyone in your personal and professional domains.
- Respect copyright and fair used guidelines. Cite your source when quoting others' work and use Creative Commons licensing when possible.

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**3. Respect Others and Ensure the Safety of Students**

- Respect the privacy and the feeling of others and do not, under any circumstances, post offensive comments about students, colleagues, or the district in general. Negative comments about others may be interpreted as cyber-bullying and could lead to disciplinary action.
- Employees who join or engage in social networks that include students have the responsibility for monitoring content and addressing appropriate behavior or activity, including the protection and safety of minors.
- Do not post photos or movies of fellow employees without their permission. Do not post photos or movies that contain student to public social media sites without parent consent unless those images are taken in the public arena, such as sporting events or fine arts public performances.

**4. Manage Employee/Student Relationships Carefully**

- Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and therefore inappropriate. Do not fraternize with students as if they are your peers or friends. Unprofessional relationships include writing personal letters, email or text messages' calling students on cell phones or allowing students to make personal calls to you unrelated to class work or school activities; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing personal matters about your private life or inviting students to do the same; engaging in sexualized dialogue in any form. Do not connect with students via personal social media networks.
- Inappropriate or offensive content posted to social media sites by employees and viewed by students, parents or other employees may be investigated by building and district officials and, if warranted, may result in disciplinary action.
- School email accounts are not private. All communications by employees to students or parents at any time from any email system is expected to be professional in topic and tone. Email between employees and students or parents is to be done through the school-provided email account, and must conform to the policies set forth in the District's Acceptable Use Policy.

**5. Classroom Use**

- Social media tools are powerful teaching and communication tools that can add great value to classroom instruction. Teachers are encouraged to use social media tools where appropriate in addressing an educational goal of the classroom.
- Inform your building or department administrator when creating social networks for classroom use and make sure parents are aware of the intended use and educational purpose.
- Use district contact information (email, address, voicemail extension, etc.) for creating and maintaining classroom-related social media accounts.
- Abide by the user guidelines established by the owner of the social media site.

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**6. Other Uses- Coaches, Advisors, Fundraisers, Programs**

- Social media networks can be helpful for groups in interacting and sharing information. Any adult authorized to interact with students on behalf of the district should abide by the same set of expectations established for District employees when it comes to social media networks.
- Inform your supervisor (or designee) when you create social media networks for any school-related use.
- Be proactive by stating clearly that the network you have created is school-related.
- Abide by the user guidelines established by the owner of the social media site.
- Monitor closely the interactions between students and deal with inappropriate use immediately.
- Consult with your immediate supervisor/building administrator if further guidance is needed.

**7. Questions**

- Social media tools, including their uses and challenges, are evolving rapidly. The District will continue to monitor its strategies and best practices for using these tools. As a result, this policy will continue to evolve. Employees with suggestions or questions are encouraged to contact their immediate supervisor.

**Confidentiality, Private Information and Privacy Rights**

Confidential or private data, including, but not limited to, protected student records, employee personal identifying information, and District assessment data, will only be loaded, stored, or transferred to District-owned devices which have encryption and/or password protection. This restriction, designed to ensure data security, encompasses all computers and devices within the DCS, any mobile devices, including flash or key drives, and any devices that access the DCS from remote locations. Staff will not use email to transmit confidential files in order to work at home or another location. Similarly, staff are prohibited from using cloud-based storage services (such as Dropbox, GoogleDrive, SkyDrive, etc.) for confidential files.

In addition, staff will not leave any devices unattended with confidential information visible. All devices must be locked down while the staff member steps away from the device, and settings enabled to freeze and lock after a set period of inactivity.

Staff data files and electronic storage areas will remain District property, subject to District control and inspection. The Technology Coordinator may access all staff data files and communications without prior notice to ensure system integrity and that users are complying with requirements of this policy and any accompanying regulations. Staff should not expect that information stored on the DCS will be private.