428 EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

PURPOSE
District 227 recognizes the value of teacher inquiry, investigation, and innovation using new technology tools to enhance the learning experience. The District also recognizes its obligation to reach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies.

The purpose of this policy is to address employee use of social media in the classroom and to provide guidance to employees on the maintenance of professional ethics and boundaries when utilizing social media in their personal and professional lives. Employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws or District policies.

DEFINITIONS
  A. **Public Social Media Networks** are defined to include various forms of discussion and information sharing including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums.
  B. **District-adopted, password protected online social media** are interactive media within the District's electronic technologies network or which the District has approved for educational use. The district has greater authority and responsibility to protect minors from inappropriate content and can limit public access with this forum.

CLASSROOM USE OF ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA
Teachers may elect to utilize District-adopted, password protected online social media in the   classroom for purposes of instruction. Teachers may also elect to use public online social   media in the classroom for purposes of instruction. Use of online social media in the classroom is subject to the following:

  A. Employees must ensure that student work, private student data and student images are not made public on public online social media sites unless written parental permission has been obtained.
  B. When utilizing either type of online social media in the classroom, employees shall ensure compliance with any applicable terms of use of the online social media site.
  C. An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's posting, displays, or communications on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable District policies.
  D. Before creating any official Chatfield Public Schools social networking sites on a non-school site (such as Facebook and Twitter), contact the Technology Coordinator for approval. If approved, the site creator must include the official district logo, a link to the District's homepage and a respective Chatfield Public Schools email and telephone number.

PERSONAL USE OF PUBLIC ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA BY EMPLOYEES
The decision to make personal use of public online social media is left to the discretion of each employee. District 227 does not monitor employee use of public online social media; however, it may take appropriate responsive action when it becomes aware of, or suspects, conduct or communication on a public online social media site that adversely affects the workplace or violates applicable professional codes of ethics.
Because readers of social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the schools and the District, the District requires employees to observe the following rules when referring to the District, its schools, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers and communities on any social media networks.

  A. An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's posting, displays, or communications on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable District policies.
  B. Employees must consider their role as school personnel before posting or communicating content that is obscene, profane, vulgar, harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior or sexual harassment.

C. Employees should not use their District e-mail address for communications on public   social media networks for personal use.
D. Employees must 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.
E. Employees may not disclose information on any public online social media site that is   private, confidential or owned by the District, its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy or copyright laws.
F. Employees may not use or post a District or school logo on any public online social media site without permission from the Superintendent or designee.
G. The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create public online social media representing students or groups within the District. When   employees, including coaches/advisors, choose to join or engage with these social   networking groups, they do so as an employee of the District.
H. Employees always have responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-student   relationships. This includes using professional judgment when necessary   for the safety of students online and responding appropriately as a mandated reporter when applicable.
I. Employees may not post images of co-workers on a social media network without the co-worker's written consent.

Employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for Chatfield Public Schools and to remember they are role models to students in the community. Employees will be held responsible for their disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information that violates the privacy rights or other rights of a third party, or for the content of anything communicated by the employee on any online social media site. An employee who fails to comply with the guidance set forth in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and other consequences, up to and including termination, subject to applicable collective bargaining agreements.

CHATFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS GUIDELINE FOR EDUCATOR USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networks are rapidly growing in popularity and use by all ages in society. Many staff members use social networking as a personal tool to connect with friends and family; some are also beginning to use it as a professional/educational tool. Social networking is a powerful tool that has the potential for some wonderful educational applications. However, just as in life, what is appropriate in one's personal and private life is not always appropriate in an educational setting. The district recognizes the value of student/teacher/parent interaction on educational networking sites (e.g. social networking sites dedicated to professional activity/collaboration/networking). Collaboration, resource sharing, and student/teacher, student/student, and teacher/parent dialog can all be facilitated using networking tools. Such interactivity outside of the school walls can greatly enhance face to-face classes.

Since social networking is relatively new to many staff members, we wanted to provide some guidelines for maintaining a clear line between personal social networking and professional/educational social networking. Both have a valued place in our increasingly digital lives.

It is also important to for employees to recognize that regardless of the setting, School District policies regarding appropriate behavior remain in full force and effect. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed as altering District expectations regarding appropriate conduct for employees, appropriate interaction between staff and students, staff and parents or the obligations of employees under District policies or the law.

Your Online Identity
As educators, we have a professional image to uphold, and how we conduct ourselves online impacts this image. As reported by the media, there have been instances of educators demonstrating unprofessional conduct while engaging in inappropriate dialogue about their schools and/or students or posting pictures and videos of themselves engaged in inappropriate activity online. Mistakenly, some educators feel that being online shields them from having their personal lives examined. Online identities are very public and can cause serious repercussions if behavior is careless or inappropriate, including disciplinary action related to employment.

Friending
One of the hallmarks of online networks, both personal and educational, is the ability to "friend" others – creating a group of others that share interests and personal news. The district strongly discourages staff members from accepting invitations to friend students within personal social networking sites. When students gain access into a staff member's network of friends and acquaintances and can view personal photos and communications, the student-teacher dynamic is altered. By friending current students, staff members provide more information than one should share in an educational setting. It is important to maintain a professional relationship with students to avoid relationships that could cause bias in the classroom. Until a student has graduated, he/she is a part of our educational setting. Social networking can be a great way to stay connected to students after they have graduated, and staff members should use their best judgment when friending students who have graduated.

Of course, the potential for "friending" parents of students also exists and can create some awkwardness for educators who want to maintain a clear line between their private and professional lives. Those who find themselves in the delicate position of either "unfriending" parents who are already a part of their social network, or not accepting requests for friendship can use the following language to help them out: "Our district has recently provided us with some guidelines to help us navigate the line between our personal and professional on-line activities. I use my Facebook account solely within the realm of my personal life and would like to maintain that personal/professional distinction. In the spirit of maintaining that distinction I need to not "friend" parents of students." The following are recommended practices.

Professional/Educational Social Networking By Staff
   a. Let your administrator, fellow teachers and parents know about your educational network. When available, use district-supported networking tools.
   b. 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 somewhere.)

c. Have a clear purpose and outcomes for the use of the networking tool and establish a code of conduct for all network participants.
d. All employees are required to strictly adhere to district policies and the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act when posting student pictures and using student names.
e. Pay close attention to the site's security settings and allow only approved participants access to the site.
f. Feel free to contact an Instructional Technology Coach if you would like help and feedback.

Personal Social Networking By Staff
a. Do not accept students as friends on personal social networking sites. Decline any student-initiated friend requests and do not initiate social networking friendships with students.
b. Use your best judgment when friending former students AFTER they have graduated. Even if a student has graduated, the former student may have friends who are still in school.
c. In general, do not friend parents of students.
d. In general, do not post to or update your page during work hours. Yes, you may be on your lunch break, but others who see your page may inaccurately infer that you are social networking when you should be teaching.
e. Remember that people classified as "friends" can download and share your information with others. You do not have control over who they share your information with.
f. *Post only what you want the world to see*. Imagine your students, their parents, or 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. Visit your profile's security and privacy settings. At a minimum, educators should have all privacy settings set to "only friends". Setting your security to allow "Friends of friends" and "Networks and Friends" can open your content to a large group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be a risk.

All Social Networking
a. Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.
b. If a staff member learns of information on a social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines, they must report it as required by law.
c. Stay informed and cautious in the use of all new networking technologies.
d. Do not release private data that you have learned in the course of your employment with the School District, as doing so may violate the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
e. Employees may be disciplined for engaging in conduct on social networking sites that is a violation of School District policy or that adversely impacts their ability to perform their job.

Resources
Should Students and Teachers be Online Friends?
http://www.education.com/magazine/article/Students_Teachers_Social_Networking/
A Teachers Guide to Using Facebook
http://www.scribd.com/doc/16957158/Teachers-Guide-to-Using-Facebook-Read-Fullscreen
Social Networking Best Practices for Educators
http://www.willard.k12.mo.us/co/tech/Document/SocialNetworkBestPractices.pdf
Connections for Learning: A White Paper. Saywire, 2009

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