

## Technology Use and Social Media Guidelines and Procedures in Support of District Policy 524

### General Purpose

As an organization with a commitment to excellence in education; the safety of our staff and students and adapting to the changing methods of using advancing 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies to teach, learn and communicate the standards for appropriate online digital environments at Owatonna Public Schools is high. While we respect the rights of students, staff and other users to utilize the variety of social media options available, we must insist that district guidelines be followed in support of Policy 524 Electronic Technologies Acceptable Use.

### Definitions:

1. **Electronic Communication Devices (ECD):** are devices that include, but are not limited to, laptops, audio players and recorders (iPod, Sansa Clip), tablet devices (iPad, Kindle, Nooks, Surface), gaming devices (3DS, Vita) and cellular/smart phones. Students may possess such devices in school, on school property, while attending after school activities, and at school-related functions as long as possession of the ECD does not interfere with educational processes or compromise the safety of staff and students or the security of the school.
2. **Cameras:** are any devices capable of recording still or motion pictures, whether in a digital or other format.
3. **Interfering Device (ID):** are a devices or objects which do not constitute a weapon or explosive but may, if used or engaged, interfere with the educational process for either the student or teacher possessing or using technology. These devices may include but are not limited to cell phone and /or Wi-Fi jammers.
4. **Audio Recorders:** are any device capable of recording sounds in any format.
5. **Social media** is a communication tool designed as a communication and learning tool. Social media includes any form of online publication where end users post or engage in conversation and include blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds podcasts or any other kinds of social media both on and off the District network.

### Social Media and Communication Guidelines & Procedures

Social Media are powerful communication tools that may have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. Social media tools can *blur* the lines between personal and professional roles of school personnel. Therefore in both personal and professional roles, employees should follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in developing and maintaining interpersonal interactions, communications and relationships.

### Practices and Procedures for all Social Media Sites: (Do's and Don'ts)

- Do - follow all applicable federal, state, and School Board requirements and regulations when using social media tools.

- Do - write in the first person and make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the Owatonna Public Schools.
- Do - be honest about who you are, where you work and what you do. How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself.
- Do - Respect federal copyright and fair use regulations.
- Don't - post private, easily identifiable information, confidential or proprietary information about Owatonna Public School students, employees, parents, or constituents.
- Don't - misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity or misrepresenting your identity
- Don't - use copyrighted materials without the appropriate permissions.
- Don't - use photos or movies taken at school without permission of the building administrator unless the photos or movies are taken at a public event.
- Don't - post photos or movies that contain students while in school without parent consent unless the photos or movies are taken at a public event.
- Don't - use Owatonna Public Schools' logo or other District images on personal social media sites or use the logo or image to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
- Don't - use district equipment or the district network as primary tools for maintaining personal accounts.

### Technology Device Guidelines and Procedures

The use of School District technology is outlined within District Policy 524. The use of personal electronic communication devices (ECD) on District property, in District facilities during the school day or in attendance at District-sponsored activities may be permitted, but subject to the limitations set forth in District policy and consistent with the policy governing the use of District technology

The following uses of the School District system and Internet resources or accounts and/or personal technology are considered acceptable for employees and other users.

- Employees may possess a cellular telephone or other personal electronic communications device (ECD) in school, on school property, at school related functions as long as possession of the ECD does not interfere with education processes or compromise the safety of staff and students or the security of the school.
- Employees may use ECD's or allow students to use ECD's in a manner that enhances educational opportunities or educational experiences.

The following uses of the School District system and Internet resources or accounts and/or personal technology are considered acceptable for students.

- A student may possess a cellular telephone or other electronic communication device (ECD) on school property, at after school activities, and school related functions as long as possession of the ECD does not interfere with educational processes or compromise the safety of staff and students and the security of the school. During the school day and at school sponsored activities, the student will comply with administrative

or school employee directives relating to the use of cellular phones or other ECD's.

- Students are permitted to use cellular phones and other ECD's before and after the school day, as defined by the building principal. Students may use ECD's as defined by building administration or the classroom teacher in a manner that enhances educational opportunities or educational experiences. The use of ECDs may be confined to certain defined locations at the school site or for specific times during the school day.

### **Recommended Best Practices in the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication Devices (For District Staff and Students)**

- *Think twice before posting:* Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both the person posting and the District. A rule to guide posting, "...If you wouldn't say it at a conference, to a group of friends, to parents, to teachers, to colleagues, or to a member of the media, then it shouldn't be said in an on-line post of any nature..."
- *Disclaimer:* It is recommended that a disclaimer be included on your social media site which states, "...The opinions and positions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect my School District's positions, strategies, or opinions, nor the opinions of my colleagues, friends and parents..." This standard disclaimer does not exempt employees or students from their responsibilities as explained in these guidelines. If asked by media to comment on a school related issue, refer them to the correct department or person in the District or when in doubt, to the building administrator or superintendent.
- *District and Personal Values:* Represent the District values of integrity, respect, collaboration, persistence and equity and your personal values. Express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. All communications should be done in good taste. Build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Do not denigrate or insult others including students, staff, administrators, parents, or other District staff. Don't use ethnic slurs, innuendos, obscenity or any other inappropriate content. Whether or not you are of legal age, consider carefully what you post through comments and photos. The District may take disciplinary action for inappropriate or illegal posts made that include but are not limited to alcohol, illegal drug use, and sexual content or activities.
- *Building Community and Positive Trust:* Represent yourself and the District, its students and parents in the best light. Respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about students or colleagues (including administrators) nor the District in general. Negative comments about people amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offense. Posts and comments should help build and support the school community. Do not comment on, nor forward, unsupported information such as rumors. You are

responsible for what you post, be certain it is accurate. If you are about to publish something that makes you hesitate, wait a day, review the guidelines and talk to colleagues, friends or other trusted adults. Once posted, it can't be taken back.

- *Strive for accuracy:* Get the facts straight before posting anything on social media.
- *Be respectful:* Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they may reflect on the person posting and/or the District.
- *Remember your audience:* Be aware that a presence in the social media world is, or easily can be, made available to the public at large. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any group or subgroup such as other students, parents, employees, and community.
- *On personal sites:* Identify your views as your own. If you identify yourself as an Owatonna Public School employee or student online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the District or anyone else who attends or works in it.
- *Classroom Use:* Social media networks are powerful teaching and communication tools that can add great value to classroom instruction. Educators are encouraged to use social media where appropriate in addressing an educational goal of the classroom. Staff, when creating social networks for classroom use, inform your supervisor (or designee) and make sure parents are aware of the use and educational purpose. Treat the social media network like a classroom and use district contact information (email, address, phone, etc) for creating and maintaining accounts. Monitor closely the interactions between students and deal with inappropriate use immediately.
- *Other Uses – Coaches, Advisors, Fundraisers, Programs:* Social media can be helpful for groups in interacting and sharing information. Please inform your supervisor (or designee) when creating social networks for any school related use. Use District contact information (email, address, phone, etc) for creating and maintaining accounts. Be proactive by stating clearly that the network you create is school related. Monitor closely the interactions between students and deal with inappropriate use immediately

### **Staff - Student Relations**

Electronic Communication Devices and today's technology present a whole new set of opportunities to interact with others in the school, within the community and across the state, nation and even the world. Ease of access and convenience, along with the reduced 'pressure' of building interpersonal relationships, opens up for users the ability to establish relationships beyond the accepted norm. It is important to be mindful of both the opportunities and pitfalls that can come through the use of these devices.

- Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to, employees fraternizing or

communicating with students as if employees and students were peers such as writing personal letters or e-mails; "texting" students on 'non-classroom related information; calling students on cell phones or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework or class work; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students to do the same (other than professional counseling by a school counselor); and engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the Internet, or in writing. Employees who post information on social media websites that include inappropriate personal information such as, but not limited to, provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, use of alcohol, drugs or anything students are prohibited from doing must understand that if students, parents or other employees obtain access to such information, the matter may be investigated by school and District officials as if it occurred through personal interactions. If warranted, such activity may lead to disciplinary action consistent with all due process procedures afforded staff and students. Additionally, certified personnel, depending upon the severity of the offense, may have their case forwarded to the Department of Education for review and possible further sanctions. The Superintendent or designees reserves the right to periodically conduct Internet searches to determine if employees or students have posted inappropriate materials on-line. If inappropriate use of computers and/or web sites is discovered, the offensive material will be downloaded and promptly brought to the attention of the Superintendent.

#### **Email**

Email between employees and students and parents shall be done through the school provided email application. The School through its electronic technologies acceptable use policies, states that all electronic or any other communications by employees to students or parents at any time, from any email system is expected to be professional, acceptable in content to any reasonable person, and limited to information that is school-related or is acceptable to both student and parent.

#### References

Social Media Guidelines for Schools Wiki –  
<http://socialmedialguidelines.pbworks.com>

Intel Social Media Guidelines –  
[http://www.intel.com/sites/sitewide/en\\_US/social-media.htm](http://www.intel.com/sites/sitewide/en_US/social-media.htm)

Cyber Law: Maximizing Safety and Minimizing Risk in Classrooms; A. Bissonette, J.D. *Corwin Press, 2009.*