

## PERSONNEL

### USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING/MEDIA

#### Statement

The Killingly Board of Education recognizes the importance of social media for its employees, and acknowledges that its employees have the right under the First Amendment, in certain circumstances, to speak out on matters of public concern. In accordance with the provisions of the First Amendment, the Board will regulate the use of social media by employees, including employees' personal use of social media, when such use:

- 1) interferes, disrupts or undermines the effective operation of the school district;
- 2) is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications;
- 3) creates a hostile work environment;
- 4) breaches confidentiality obligations of school district employees; and
- 5) violates the law, board policies and/or other school rules and regulations.

**Policy approved: October 10, 2018**

KILLINGLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Killingly, CT 06239

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## PERSONNEL

### USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING/MEDIA

#### Definitions:

Social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, as well as social connectivity programs and applications such as snapchat.

Board of Education includes all names, logos, buildings, images and entities under the authority of the Board of Education.

The Killingly Board of Education encourages communication with our community through Official District-Sponsored Social Media sites. We also recognize the large role our educational community plays in the lives of our faculty, and ask that all Killingly employees adhere to the following guidelines in personal social networking:

#### Rules Concerning Personal Social Media Activity

1. An employee may not mention, discuss or reference the Board of Education, the school district or its individual schools, programs or teams on personal social networking sites in a manner that could reasonably be construed as an official school district communication.
2. Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students, parents, and colleagues. For example, absent an unrelated special relationship (e.g., relative or family friend), it is

not appropriate for a teacher or administrator to "friend" a student or his/her parent or guardian or otherwise establish special relationships with selected students through personal social media, and it is a violation of professional boundaries for an employee to give students or parents access to personal postings unrelated to school.

3. Employees must refrain from engaging in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications. Such posts reflect poorly on the school district's reputation, can affect the educational process and may substantially and materially interfere with an employee's ability to fulfill his/her professional responsibilities.

4. Employees are individually responsible for their personal posts on social media.

As personal posts and activities are outside the scope of employment, employees may be personally liable to any individual that views an employee's social media posts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment.

5. Employees are required to comply with all Board of Education policies and procedures with respect to the use of computer equipment, networks or electronic devices when accessing social media sites. Any access to personal social media activities while on school property or using school district equipment must comply with those policies, and may not interfere with an employee's duties at work.

6. Killingly Public School Employees are prohibited from using their school district title as well as adding references to the District in any correspondence including, but not limited to, e-mails, postings, blogs, and social networking sites unless the communication is of an official nature and is serving the mission of the district. This prohibition also includes signature lines and personal e-mail accounts.

7. Employees shall not post updates to their status on any social networking sites during normal working hours including posting of statements or comments on the social networking sites of others during school time unless related to school-sponsored activities or events. Employees must seek approval from the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee for such use.

8. The Board of Education reserves the right to monitor all employee use of district computers and other electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any personal communication or post made through social media while using district computers, cellular telephones or other electronic data devices.

9. All posts on personal social media must comply with the Board of Education's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is unsure about the confidential nature of information the employee is considering posting, the employee shall consult with his/her supervisor prior to making the post.

10. An employee may not include a link in a personal social media site or webpage to the Board of Education's website or the websites of individual schools, programs or teams; or post Board of Education material on a social media site or webpage without written permission of his/her supervisor.

11. All Board of Education policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to public trust, illegal harassment, code of conduct, and protecting confidential information.

### **Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity**

1. If an employee seeks to use social media sites as an educational tool or in relation to extracurricular activities or programs of the school district, the employee must seek and obtain the permission of his/her supervisor in writing prior to setting up the site.

2. If an employee wishes to use a social media site to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club or a school-based activity or an official school-based organization, or an official sports team, the employee must also comply with the following rules:

- The employee must set up the club, etc. as a group list which will be "closed" (e.g. membership in the group is limited to students, parents and appropriate school personnel, and "monitored" (e.g. the employee had the ability to access and supervise communications on the social media site)
- When Facebook is used as the social media site, members will not be established as "friends," but as members of the group list. When other social media sites are used, the employee will establish a similar parameter on the basis of the functionality of the social media site utilized
- Anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the site may only gain access by the permission of the employee (e.g. teacher, administrator, supervisor or coach). Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the employee invites them and allows them to join.
- Parents shall be permitted to access any site that their child has been invited to join.
- Access to the site may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization or team.
- The employee responsible for the site will monitor it regularly.
- The settings shall be set such that comments and pictures can only be posted by the site administrator. Members may not post comments, and/or pictures.
- The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any site established by the employee for a school-related purpose.
- Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such district-sponsored social media activity.

3. Employees are required to refrain from making harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate statements in their social media posts on district-sponsored sites.

4. Employees are required to comply with all Board of Education policies and procedures and all applicable laws with respect to the use of computer equipment, networks or devices when accessing district-sponsored social media sites.

5. The Board of Education reserves the right to monitor all employee use of district computers and other electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any communication or post made through social media while using district computers, cellular telephones or other data devices.

6. All posts on district-sponsored social media must comply with the Board of Education's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is unsure about the confidential nature of information the employee is considering posting, the employee shall consult with his/her supervisor prior to making the post.

7. An employee may not link a district-sponsored social media site or webpage to any personal social media sites or sites not sponsored by the school district.

8. An employee may not use district-sponsored social media communications for private financial gain, political, commercial, advertisement, proselytizing or solicitation purpose.

9. An employee may not use district-sponsored social media communications in a manner that misrepresents personal views as those of the Board of Education, individual school or school district, or in a manner that could be construed as such.

10. Monitoring comments is the responsibility of all users.

#### **Rules concerning online fundraising:**

1. Online fundraising for clubs, teams, classes or groups must be approved by the Killingly Board of Education and must comply with district fundraising policy as outlined in Policy 1324
2. All online fundraising must occur through the official Killingly Public Schools Web Page. This ensures appropriate management of funds. Teams, clubs and organizations may not create individual fundraising websites such as "Go Fund Me" without written permission of the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee for such use.

#### **Disciplinary Consequences**

Violation of the Board's policy concerning the use of social/networking media or these administrative regulations may lead to discipline up to and including the termination of employment consistent with state and federal law.

#### **Policy**

This Policy has been developed and adopted by this Board to provide guidance and direction to staff members on how to avoid actual and/or the appearance of inappropriate conduct toward students and/or the community while using social networking sites.