

Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified

Use of Social Media by Employees

Public employees are public servants and are entrusted with the public trust. Because of this public trust The Amity Regional School District No. 5 (ARSD) Board of Education (Board) personnel are held to a higher standard of professionalism than private citizens. Board personnel must work hard to gain and maintain the trust and confidence of the community. Employees must give thoughtful consideration to their actions to avoid damaging the reputation and trust the Board has with the community.

The Board recognizes the importance and utility of social media for its employees, while also recognizing that misuse of social media may cause harm. Social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites or applications such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Snapchat. The policy applies to all expressive activity on social media platforms such as liking, commenting on, or sharing the post of another individual or entity.

ARSD strongly encourages all staff members to carefully review the privacy settings on social networking sites they use and exercise care and good judgement when posting content and information on such sites. Ordinarily, the use of social media by employees, including employees' personal use of social media, will not be a legal or policy issue. While a policy cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use employees must refrain from social media use that: 1) interferes, disrupts, or undermines the effective operation of ARSD; 2) is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, discriminatory or threatening, or similarly inappropriate communications; 3) creates a hostile work or educational environment; 4) breaches ARSD's confidentiality obligations; 5) harms the goodwill and reputation of ARSD in the community by use of inflammatory, exaggerated, and/or unsubstantiated information; or 6) violates the law, board policies, and/or other school rules and regulations. The Board, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The effectiveness of the Board depends importantly on the respect and trust of the community and on the perception in the community that it acts fairly, even-handedly, and without bias. The Board may take action with respect to social media activity to prevent disruption to its operations. The Board may also act, if the speech substantially or materially interferes with the employee's bona fide job performance or the working relationship between the employee and the employer.

The laws regarding social media continue to evolve and change. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit an employee's right to use social media under applicable law, as it may evolve. The Board acknowledges, for example, that its employees have the right under the First Amendment, in certain circumstances, to speak out on matters of public concern. Likewise, employees have rights to engage in concerted activities for their mutual aid and protection. The Board will resolve any conflict between this policy and applicable law in favor of the law.

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(c.f. 4118.24 – Staff/Student Relations)
(c.f. 4118.5 – Acceptable Computer Network Use)
(c.f. 5131.911 – Bullying and Teen Dating Violence)

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes.
The Freedom of Information Act.
[53A](#)-182B Harassment in the first degree.
[31](#)-48d Employees engaged in electronic monitoring required to give prior notice to employees. Exceptions. Civil penalty.
United States Code, Title 20.
675 1-6777 Enhancing Education Through Technology Act, Title II, Part D, especially: 6777 Internet safety.
United States Code, Title 47.
254 Universal service discounts (E-rate).
Code of Federal Regulations, Title 47.
54.520 Internet safety policy and technology protection measures, E-rate discounts.
U.S. Constitution, 1st Amendment.
Connecticut Constitution, Article 1, Sections 3, 4, 14