EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The District recognizes the importance of using social media as a communication and learning tool. Employees are expected to exercise good judgement and serve as positive ambassadors for the District and appropriate role models for students while using social media. This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which for purposes of this policy includes: blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

District presence on any social media site, including school-related accounts, such as clubs, teams, field trips, courses and other affiliations with the District or a District school, must be authorized by the Superintendent or designee. Any sites, accounts or pages existing absent prior authorization will be subject to review, editing and/or removal. Only individuals authorized by the District may publish content to a District social media site.

District Responsibilities

The District acknowledges that employees have the right under the First Amendment, in certain circumstances, to speak on matters of public concern. However, the District shall regulate the use of social media by employees, including employees' personal use of social media, when such use:

- Interferes or disrupts the educational environment of the school district;
- Harasses students, coworkers or members of the community;
- Creates a hostile work environment;
- Poses a safety threat to students, coworkers, or school operations;
- Breaches confidentiality, including but not limited to, posting data, documents and photographs;
- Implies that the employee is acting as an agent of the school district by referencing school or district images, logos, official names, or materials; or
- Violates state or federal laws, district policy or regulations, or, if applicable, the negotiated agreement.

The District prohibits personal social media use while on-duty; except on breaks or when authorized by the Superintendent or designee. District computers and/or the district network shall be used solely for classroom/district-related purposes.

Employee’s Responsibilities

Employees must maintain professionalism in their interactions with students and the community at all times. The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of the District as well as personal use of social media by the employee.

- Employees shall not post any information online that violates state and federal laws, District policy or regulation, or, if applicable, the negotiated agreement.

- Employees shall not use their school email address for communications on public social media sites that have not been approved by the District.
- Employees shall not act as a spokesperson for the District, post comments as a representative of the District, or respond to comments about the District except as authorized by the Superintendent or designee.
- Employees shall not disclose information, including photographs, on any social media site that is confidential or proprietary to the District, its students, or employees, or that is protected by data privacy laws or district policy, except as authorized by the Superintendent or designee.
- Employees shall not use or post the District logo on any social media site without written permission from the Superintendent or designee.
- Employees shall not post images of students on any social media site without prior written parental consent or as authorized by the Superintendent or designee.
- Employees shall not use images, emails, or other personally identifying information for personal gain or profit.
- When referring to the District, its schools, students, families, programs, activities, employees, or volunteers on any social media networks, employees must be professional in all communications (text, images, or other).
- When referring to the District, its schools, students, families, programs, activities, employees, or volunteers on any social media sites, employees shall not use obscene, profane or vulgar language on any social media sites or engage in communications or conduct that is 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, sexual harassment, or bullying.
- The District recognizes that students, staff, or other members of the public may create social media sites representing clubs, teams, or other groups within the District. When employees choose to join or interact with these social media sites, they do so in their capacity as an employee of the District. Employees shall maintain appropriate employee-student relationships at all times and refrain from online interactions with students on social media sites outside of those forums dedicated to academic or school related use.
- Employees are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between their personal social media use and any District-related social media sites. When practical, employees should keep District social media accounts separate from personal accounts. Employees that associate themselves with the District may use the following disclaimer on their personal social media site: “The views on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views, opinions, vision or strategies of the Mohall Lansford Sherwood Public School.”
- Employees who participate in social media sites may include information about their work with the District as part of their personal profile, as it would relate to a typical social conversation. This may include:

  - Work information included in a personal profile, including the District's name, job title, and job duties.
  - Status updates regarding an employee's own job promotion
  - Personal participation in District-sponsored events, including volunteer activities.

- Employee's personal social media accounts shall not be linked to District students' online profiles. This section does not apply to a student that is an employee's family member.
- Employees must report any inappropriate behavior or activity on social media immediately to administration.
- Employees must be mindful that any Internet information is ultimately accessible to the world. To avoid jeopardizing their professional effectiveness, employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with privacy policies, settings and protections on any social networking websites to which they choose to subscribe and be aware that information posted online, despite privacy protections, is easily and often reported to administrators or exposed to District students.

Violations

Inappropriate activity by employees while on social media is subject to disciplinary action up to and including, but not limited to, revocation of the privileges granted in this policy, dismissal, and referral to law enforcement officials, as appropriate and in accordance with law. Inappropriate use shall be determined by school administration. The District may consult with its legal counsel prior to making a dismissal under this policy.

The District shall investigate any suspected or alleged violations of this policy and may, but is not required to, actively monitor websites to ensure employee compliance with this policy.

Complementing NDSBA Templates (may contain items not adopted by the Board)

- ACDA, Acceptable Use
- ABCA, Copyrighted Material & Intellectual Property
- DE, Staff Code of Conduct
- DEAD, Staff Use of Electronic Devices
- DEBA, Confidentiality
- DEBD, Student-Staff Relations
- DEBF, Employee Speech
- DEBG, Electronic Communications with Students

End of Mohall Lansford Sherwood Public Policy DEBH..... Adopted: 01/14/2020