

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION / SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose

The Grand Coulee Dam School District Board of Directors recognizes that social media (as defined below) offers new and exciting opportunities to express creativity, share knowledge, build a sense of belonging and community, and engage in ongoing conversations with students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, colleagues and friends about common interests. At the same time, employee social media can impact the school community and may in some instances disrupt the Grand Coulee Dam School District's ("Districts") educational mission. The District encourages employees to consider the impact of social media on the school community. The District also recognizes that school employees have the constitutionally protected right to speak freely as private citizens on matters of public concern, unless the District's interests in the efficient and effective operation of its workplace outweigh the employee's free-speech interests. This policy is intended to provide guidance to school employees about social media use.

Definition

"Social Media" means a broadly accessible internet-based communication platform used to interact with other users and share content among a network. Examples of social media include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Blogs and Wikis.

Educational Social Media Use

The District may allow employees to use social media sites for legitimate educational purposes. Employees may only use social media sites for legitimate educational purposes if approved by the District.

1. To be used for legitimate educational purposes, a social media site must be reasonably related to instructional, educational, or extra-curricular program matters. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee determines whether the use of a social media site is for legitimate educational purposes.
2. In using social media sites for legitimate educational purposes, employees must comply with professional standards. That includes, among other things, following the expectations described in Procedure 2022P Electronic Resources and maintaining professional staff-student boundaries.
3. Only those social media accounts approved by the District may use the District's name, the name of any of its schools or departments, its mascots or team names, or otherwise present words or images that purport to identify the social media account with the District, its schools, departments, activities, or programs.

Personal Social Media Use

1. Employees may not use social media for personal use during work time.
2. The decision of whether or not to use social media for personal use outside of work hours is left to the discretion of the individual District employee, and the District recognizes that employees have a constitutionally protected right to speak as private citizens on matters of public concern. However, that does not mean they are immune from discipline when using

social media for personal use.

3. As role models for the District's students, employees are responsible for their conduct outside of work. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their personal use of social media as they are for any other conduct outside of work. If an employee's personal use of social media interferes with the District's ability to effectively operate, including interfering with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee may be disciplined, up to and including termination.
4. Employees shall not communicate or otherwise disseminate any confidential information they have access to because of their employment with the District.
5. Employees shall not use District or school names, logos, images, etc. on personal social media sites in a way that implies the employees are spokespersons of the District or that the site is an official site of the District.
6. Employees shall not use personal social media sites to contact students.

Cross References:

Board Policy

2020 Course Design & Adoption of Materials
2022 Electronic Resources
2025 Copyright Compliance
3207 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
3231 Student Records
4040 Public Access to District Records
5281 Disciplinary Action and Discharge

Legal References: 18 USC §§ 2510-2522

Electronic Communication Privacy Act Pub. L
No. 110-385 Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act

Management Recourses:

Policy News, February 2012
Policy News, June 2008
Policy News, June 2001
Policy News, August 1998

Electronic Resources
Congress Requires Internet Blocking at School
Permission required to review e-mail