

## **STAFF MEMBERS AND ELECTRONIC OR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS**

The Superintendent and the School Principals will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the online, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to the following prohibited behaviors:

1. Improper fraternization with students using electronic or digital communication.
  - a. Teachers may not list current students as “friends” on networking sites.
  - b. All e-contacts with students should be through the district’s school-approved platform-
  - c. Improper private contact via electronic or digital communication e-mail or phone is prohibited.
2. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content.
3. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol.
4. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology.

As per state law, employees are discouraged from sharing content or comments containing the following when directed at a citizen of the State of Oklahoma:

- 1) Obscene sexual content or links to obscene sexual content;
- 2) Abusive behavior and bullying language or tone;
- 3) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity; and
- 4) Disclosure of any information required to be maintained as confidential by law, regulation, or internal policy.

“Social networking or “social media” means interaction with external websites or services based upon participant contributions to the content. Types of social media include social and professional networks, blogs, micro blogs, video or phone sharing and social bookmarking; and

“Comment” means a response to an article or social media content submitted by a commenter.

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials online. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the School

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Principals and Superintendent will download the offensive material and promptly bring that misconduct to the attention of the school district’s legal counsel for review.

The board of education shall designate school-approved platforms. The administration shall publish school-approved platforms on the district’s website and in student or staff handbooks.

School personnel engaging in electronic or digital communication with an individual student shall include the student’s parent or guardian in any electronic or digital communication, unless such communication is on a school approved platform and related to school and academic communications. The only exception to this requirement may be made in case of an emergency, subject to subsequent notification to the parent or guardian. School employees shall make reasonable efforts to use school-approved platforms, systems, or applications that allow automatic inclusion of parents or guardians in communications with students.

School employees reported to have engaged in electronic or digital communications that would violate this policy and state law shall be placed on administrative leave while the school district investigates the incident. If the investigation finds that no misconduct occurred, the school employee shall be reinstated, and the incident noted in the personnel file.

Employees who engage in any of the above-referenced prohibited behaviors are subject to the possibility of penalties, including termination of employment, for failure to exercise good judgment. Incidents will be reported in compliance with district policy FFG and state law.

**Bethel Public School approved communication platforms.**

- Parent Square
- Google Workspace (including Gmail and Google Classroom)
- Remind
- Seesaw
- Class Dojo
- Bloomz

**REFERENCE:**        **74 O.S. § 840-8.1**  
                               **70 O.S. § 6-401.**

**\*A copy of this policy shall be distributed to each affected employee by email.**