



CAPITAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Policy

Section: Human Resources
Title: Social Media/Personnel
Policy #: 500-27
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PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide Capital School District personnel with an overview of what is considered appropriate use of social media. Because of the evolving nature of social media, personnel should be aware that this Policy is not intended to be comprehensive in scope. Instead, personnel are expected to apply the standards set forth in this Policy and the more general standards of good judgment and professionalism to all conduct, including their conduct online.

This policy is intended to supplement – not replace – other Capital School District policies. Although social media is a relatively new medium, it is subject to the same standards of conduct that apply to other activities. Therefore, all of the expectations and obligations contained in other Capital School District policies also apply online. Other policies that may be relevant include Capital School District Acceptable Use Policy (200-11), State of Delaware Acceptable Use Policy, and other policies governing employees conduct.

And, as with other Capital School District policies, any personnel whose conduct violates this policy will be subject to the Capital School District’s disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

1. Questions:

Social media changes rapidly and there will likely be events or issues that are not addressed in this policy. If, at any time, you are uncertain about the application of this policy or if a question relating to the appropriate use of social media arises that is not fully addressed by this policy, you should seek the guidance of the appropriate person *before* posting or otherwise engaging online. When in doubt, personnel should ask for guidance first because, once the information is online, it cannot be recalled.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

2. Persons Covered:

This policy applies to all online and social-media activity of all Capital School District personnel. This policy applies without regard to whether such activity occurs in the workplace or whether Capital School District equipment or technology is used; refer to the CSD Acceptable Use Policy (#200-11).

3. Technologies Covered:

“Social media” includes all forms of online applications, websites, tools, and platforms that enable communication between users. The specific types of social media change frequently but, as a general matter, include: (a) social-networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn)

(b) blogs and micro-blogs (e.g. Wordpress, Blogger, Twitter, and Tumblr); and (c) content-sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Scribd). Additionally, comments posted to a website or blog, and other user-generated content are subject to the standards set forth in this policy.

4. Be Professional:

Maintain professionalism in all online activities. Apply a good-judgment test for every activity relating to your employment. For example, what would your parents, students, or immediate supervisor think of your posting?

- a. Capital School District employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online.
- b. Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.
- c. By identifying yourself as a Capital School District employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at Capital School District.

5. Be Cautious:

Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and any sensitive or restricted confidential and sensitive information. What is published is widely accessible, not easily retractable, and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Personnel should be extremely cautious about the information they post online, taking particular care to avoid disclosing personal information about themselves, their families or the Capital School District. Always consider the possibility that what you post online will become *public* and *permanent*.

Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect a high standard on your professionalism. At the same time, be cautious of not only the material that you are posting to sites under your control, but also sites that are not directly managed by the user. Photographs or other materials showing you in a negative light may end up on a social media site. While you are not directly posting the information, you still may be held accountable for those actions that are deemed inappropriate.

6. Acknowledge who you are:

Your honesty will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are blogging about your work at Capital School District, use your real name, identify that you work for Capital School District, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in something you discussing, be the first to point it out.

7. On personal sites:

Identify your views as your own. If you identify yourself as a Capital School District staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of Capital School District. Use a disclaimer such as:

“The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent Capital School District’s positions or opinions.”

This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt Capital School District employees from a special or personal responsibility when posting online.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Employees are prohibited from engaging in, accessing, or otherwise using social media during work time.

As stated above, personnel's online activity, including participation in social media, is subject to the same standards of conduct applicable to in-person communications and activities. The following non-exclusive list is intended to address some issues that are of particular importance to the Capital School District, refer to Capital School District Acceptable Use Policy (#200-11).

Employees are prohibited from engaging in any of the following in their online activities and posts:

1. Promoting illegal activity, including the use of illegal drugs;
2. Promoting or endorsing violence;
3. Comments that are disparagement, defamatory, discriminatory, harassing or false of co-workers, supervisors, members of the public with whom you interact as a result of your employment;
4. Directing any negative comment towards or about any individual or group based on race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, or other characteristic protect by law;
5. Disclosure of any confidential information.
6. Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to: employees fraternizing or communicating with students as if employees and students were peers such as writing personal letters or e-mails; "texting" students; Social Media web sites, calling students on cell phones or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework or class work; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students to do the same (other than professional counseling by a school counselor); and engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the internet, or in writing.
7. Posting, uploading, or sharing any recording or images (including audio, pictures, and videos), taken in the workplace or at any Employer-sponsored event without the express advance authorization from the building principal and/or district administration.

Employees who are found to have engaged in inappropriate behavior will be subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.

DUTY TO REPORT

Employees have a duty to report inappropriate use of social media by another staff member, just as you have a duty to report harassment or other inappropriate workplace conduct. Thus, any staff member who observes or becomes aware of the violation of this Policy by another staff member has the duty to provide such information to your immediate supervisor and cooperate fully in any subsequent investigation. Failure to report inappropriate social-media use or other violations of this policy by another staff member may constitute, by itself, conduct that warrants corrective action – regardless of whether the reportable conduct is subject to such corrective action. All employees should contact the Human Resource Office at 672-1507.

Violations of this policy can come from external sources and will be appropriately reviewed and investigated by district administration (e.g. parents, students, other individuals, etc.)