

## Okanogan School District

### Procedure – Staff Expression

The district's expectations and rules for expression by staff while performing job responsibilities, using district facilities as employees, or appearing to be acting in their role as a district staff member, are as follows:

1. Employees must act consistent with district policies and procedures. This includes maintaining an environment that is free from discrimination, while promoting the district's official mission and vision.
2. Staff perform job responsibilities and represent the district in their use of district email accounts, school district buildings, district property, and classrooms, and in how they present themselves to students in performing their job responsibilities. District email signatures, classroom décor (posters, stickers, signage, etc.), expressive attire while on the job (buttons, hats, shirts, etc.), social media used in the course of employment, and other such channels of staff messaging are thus subject to these expectations:
  - a. It is permissible for staff to use such channels of communication only for messaging that is consistent with district policy and procedure and is:
    - i. curricular; or
    - ii. approved as the district's official position and message; or
    - iii. context-appropriate civil personal expression.
  - b. It is never permissible for staff to use such channels of communication for messaging that is:
    - i. obscene, lewd, or vulgar;
    - ii. libelous or slanderous;
    - iii. in violation of district policies on bullying, harassment, or intimidation;
    - iv. in violation of the district's policies on nondiscrimination;
    - v. promoting or opposing electoral candidates, campaigns, political parties, or ballot propositions;
    - vi. proselytizing or disparaging religious or irreligious beliefs; or
    - vii. otherwise in violation of district policy or procedure.
3. Controversial issues should be addressed as part of the curriculum consistent with district policy 2331, and any related policies and procedures, or through district-approved messaging. Staff should not engage in communication, including personal expression, that violates this procedure, any other district policy or procedure, or when a substantial disruption or interference with the staff member's duties or the district's mission or programs is foreseeable. This may include, but is not limited to, communication that materially undermines trust with students, or that generates significant tension among staff, parents, and students.
4. The district reserves the right to specifically direct or limit any particular staff messaging that is subject to these expectations.

5. Procedures to challenge instructional or library materials used in schools can be found in district procedure 2020P Course Design, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials and procedure 2021P Library Information and Technology Programs.

The private and personal life of any employee, including participation in political activities, is not within the appropriate concern or attention of the district unless it adversely affects the performance of the employee's professional responsibilities. Off-duty expression is not immune from potential discipline if it interferes with the district's operations, or prevents the district from functioning efficiently and effectively. Staff members who use social media in a private capacity must do so consistently with district policy 5253 and procedure 5253P regarding professional staff and student boundaries.

Violation of this procedure may constitute sufficient cause for potential discipline up to and including termination, in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, and contractual terms.

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