

IJNDD - POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Approved by the FRSC on 03.04.26

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:

1. Improper fraternization with students using social media or other electronic means.
 - a. Teachers may not friend or follow current students on social media.
 - b. All electronic contacts with students should be through the district's computer and telephone system, except emergency situations or as provided in paragraph d below. All communication should be professional in nature and adhere to appropriate teacher/student boundaries.
 - c. Team, class, or student organization pages, accounts, or groups will be created only in conjunction with the coach or faculty advisor. All groups must include the appropriate administrator as a member. Access to the page will remain with the coach or faculty advisor.
 - d. All contact and messages by coaches and faculty advisors with team members shall be sent to all team members or to the team captain (including text or other electronic communications), except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the appropriate administrator.
 - e. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district. Approval may be given, particularly in regard to the situation outlined in paragraph d above.
 - f. Inappropriate or unprofessional messaging to students via phone or electronic device is prohibited.
2. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
3. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating the use of drugs and alcohol or violence
4. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology or other district electronic messaging.
5. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to

exercise professional judgment in online conduct.

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 or other electronic devices is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Fall River Public Schools adopts the following expectations for the use of electronic media for all staff members:

1. The best way to eliminate risks associated with a staff member's use of personal social media with students is to avoid it.
2. When engaging in electronic communication, staff members should apply the same principles used in other forms of communication, including the use of discretion and an awareness of the possibility that the communication may be shared with others. Staff members are reminded that by hitting "send," they effectively eliminate their ability to control to whom the message will be forwarded in the future.
3. Staff members shall adhere to appropriate staff/student boundaries in all communications, electronic or otherwise.
4. Staff members shall adhere to student privacy rights, student record laws, and the laws and rights of employees and students to have their personnel and medical information kept confidential at all times. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that subjects such information to retrieval by those third parties.
5. Staff members should communicate electronically with students and parents on educational matters only, and only through District-based electronic resources, ParentSquare. Use of personal email accounts, personal cellular phones, or personal social networking accounts to discuss school business with students and parents is strongly discouraged and should only be allowed if no other District-based electronic resources can be used for the communication. Information sent or received by educators or Fall River Public School staff members through personal email, personal cellular phones or personal social network accounts related to the individual's employment in the Fall River Public Schools is subject to public records retention, exemption, and disclosure requirements, and may be reviewed and examined by the District at any time.

6. Any conduct or communication, whether online or not, that is inappropriate, unprofessional, undermines a staff member's ability to instruct or maintain control and discipline with students, compromises one's objectivity, or harms students, is considered to be a violation of this Policy. A staff member may also face individual liability for inappropriate online communications with students and/or parents and guardians.
7. There is no expectation of privacy for staff members who use personal email or other electronic media accounts when accessed using school district technology
8. Staff members shall maintain professionalism in all electronic communications.
9. When using Facebook or other social networking accounts, a staff member may not, without express permission from the Superintendent of Schools, use or post the school's or District's logo, likeness, or any school photographs or other property that belongs to the District. Additionally, no staff member may use or post any photographs of a student or students (or list the name or names of students) without express written consent of the student and/or their parent or guardian (if the student is under 18 years old).
10. Staff members should immediately report any inappropriate messages they receive from a student, parent, colleague, or another staff member to their immediate supervisor(s) or building principal.

1. Miscellaneous

1. This policy is not intended to infringe upon a staff member's right to speak publicly on matters of public concern or to communicate with fellow members of their union on workplace issues so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions, complies with the provisions of this policy, the Internet Acceptable Use Policy, and the associated Administrative Procedures and does not interfere with the performance of any job duties.
2. References to "Facebook" are not included to limit application of this policy to the sole use of that program. All online, electronic, or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change, it is impossible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications.

SOURCE: MASC March 2018