

## **West Bonner County School District No. 83**

### **PERSONNEL**

**5325**

#### Employee Use of Social Media Sites, Including Personal Sites

Because of the unique nature of social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, and because of the District's desire to protect its interest with regard to its electronic records, the following rules have been established to address social media site usage by all employees:

##### **Protect Confidential and Proprietary Information**

Employees shall not post confidential or proprietary information about the District, its employees, students, agents or others. The employee shall adhere to all applicable privacy and confidentiality policies adopted by the District or as provided by state or federal law.

##### Do Not Use District Name, Logos, or Images

Employees shall not use the District logos, images, iconography, etc. on personal social media sites. Nor shall employees use the District name to promote a product, cause or political party or political candidate. Nor shall employees use personal images of students, or names or data relating to students, absent written authority of the parent of a minor or authority of an adult or emancipated student.

##### Respect District Time and Property

Employees will use e-mail and social media for personal purposes only during non-work times, such as during lunch or before or after school. Any use must occur during times and places that the use will not interfere with job duties, negatively impact job performance, or otherwise be disruptive to the school environment or its operation.

##### On Personal Sites

If you identify yourself as a District employee online, it should be clear that the views expressed, posted, or published are personal views, not necessarily those of the District, its Board, employees, or agents.

Opinions expressed by staff on a social networking website have the potential to be disseminated far beyond the speaker's desire or intention, and could undermine the public perception of fitness of the individual to educate students, and thus undermine teaching effectiveness. In this way, the effect of the expression and publication of such opinions could potentially lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member, up to and including termination or nonrenewal of the contract of employment

##### **Keep Personal and Professional Accounts Separate**

Staff members who decide to engage in professional social media activities will maintain separate professional and personal email addresses. Staff members will not use their District email address for personal social media activities. Use of District email for this purpose is prohibited and will be considered a violation of District policy that may result in disciplinary action.

### **Contact with Students**

Although it is desired that staff members have a sincere interest in students as individuals, partiality and the appearance of impropriety must be avoided. Pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, individuals shall maintain a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside of the classroom. Excessive informal and/or social involvement with students is therefore prohibited. This includes:

- Listing current students as “friends” on networking sites wherein personal information is shared or available for review which results in the certificated professional employee not maintaining the Code of Ethics requiring professional relationships with students both inside and outside the classroom;
- Contacting students through electronic means other than the District’s email and telephone system;
- Coaches electronically contacting a team member or members without including all team members in the communication;
- Giving private cell phone or home phone numbers to students without prior approval of the District;
- Inappropriate contact of any kind including via electronic media.

Nothing in this policy prohibits District staff and students from the use of education websites and/or use of social networking websites created for curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular purposes where the professional relationship is maintained with the student.

Failure to maintain a professional relationship with students, both inside and outside of a classroom setting, including interaction via social networking websites of any nature, e-mailing, texting, or any other electronic methods will result in the required reporting of such conduct to the Professional Standards Commission by the District’s Administration.

### **Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity**

If an employee wishes to use Facebook, Twitter, or other similar social media sites to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club or a school-based activity or an official school-based organization, the employee must also comply with the following rules:

- The employee must set up the club, etc. as a group list which will be “closed and moderated.”
- The employee must set up mechanisms for delivering information to students that are not members of the group via non-electronic means.
- Members will not be established as “friends” but as members of the group list.

- Anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the site may only gain access by the permission of the employee (e.g. teacher, administrator, or supervisor). Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the employee invites them and allows them to join.
- Parents shall be permitted to access any site that their child has been invited to join. Parents shall report any communications they believe to be inappropriate by students or school personnel to District Administration.
- Access to the site may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization, or team.
- The employee responsible for the site will monitor it regularly.
- The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any site established by the employee for a school-related purpose.
- Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such District-sponsored social media activity. This includes maintaining a separation between the school activity pages and employees' personal social media profiles and pages.
- Postings made to the site must comply with the District's Employee Electronic and On-Line Services Usage Policy.
- The Superintendent reserves the right to shut down or discontinue the group if he/she believes it is in the best overall interest of the students.

Cross Reference: 3270P Acceptable Use of Electronic Networks

Legal Reference: Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators

Policy History:

Adopted on: July 14, 2010

Revised on: December 18, 2012