

Soda Springs School District No. 150 recognizes the value and importance of electronic communication, online presence, and innovative technology tools to enhance the learning experience and work environment within the district. The district also recognizes the obligation of teachers and administrators to be positive ambassadors for our schools and to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies.

Employee use of electronic communication and entertainment devices may interfere with or disrupt the educational process as well as distract personnel from their job responsibilities. Additionally, employee use of social networking and other Internet or electronic communication may interfere with the employee's professional relationships with students, parents, and members of the community.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **DEFINITIONS**

"Electronic communication and entertainment devices" include, but are not limited to, personal cell phones, tablets, personal computers, laptops, iPads, iPods, Blackberries, pagers, MP3 players, and other similar devices or media players, without regard to the commercial name or manufacturer of the device, whether handheld, car models, laptop or other computer usage, or combinations of any of the above.

"Social media networks" include, but are not limited to, websites, web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media generally available to the public that does not fall within the district's technology network (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, MySpace, blog sites, Wikipedia, etc.).

## **USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT SCHOOL**

Employees are required to limit their personal use of electronic communication and entertainment devices to emergencies or during authorized breaks. Such devices are prohibited from being used during instructional time unless the specific use is consistent with legitimate, instructional purposes.

## **PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications at all times. Employees may not use obscene, offensive, profane, or vulgar language; or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, bullying, or the inappropriate use of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the district or make comments as a representative of the district, except as authorized by the board, superintendent or designee. When authorized as a spokesperson for the district, employees must disclose their employment relationship with the district.

### **COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS**

The board recognizes that there are occasions when a district employee may have a legitimate educational need to communicate with a student outside of school hours. Any communication between a district employee and a student via telecommunications, text messages, e-mails, and/or any other medium must have an educational purpose and be professional in content and tone.

Employees who engage in such communications with students are expected to act as representatives of the district. Any communications with students may be subject to review by the district. Employees will not make any statements or forward information that could reasonably be perceived to be:

1. In violation of federal or state laws, or district policies;
2. Personal in nature;
3. Obscene, vulgar, or inappropriate in content;
4. Harmful to a student;
5. Disruptive of the educational process; or
6. In violation of FERPA and other confidentiality requirements.

At the discretion of the superintendent or designee, employees may be required to copy all such communications to students to the building administrator or designee.

In the event an employee receives any communication from a student that is inappropriate or creates concerns, the employee has an obligation to report such communication to the building administrator or designee.

### **E-MAIL**

All employees are assigned a district e-mail account, which should be used for all official business. Employees must use their district e-mail account when acting in the capacity of a district employee and when corresponding with parents or students. Employees may not use their district assigned e-mail address for communications on social media networks without prior district approval.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Employees are prohibited from discussing students and work-related matters on any social media network. Employees are expected to comply with the following guidelines when engaging in communications on social media networks:

1. In the event the employee identifies himself/herself as an employee of the district, he/she must post a disclaimer that the views expressed by the employee are personal and not made in his/her capacity as an employee of the district.
2. Information posted by an employee must comply with state and federal laws, and district policies, guidelines, and procedures.

Employees may not disclose information on any social media network that is confidential or proprietary to the district, its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy laws.

3. Employees may not post copyrighted images or materials without prior permission from the owner, unless it falls within an exception and complies with copyright laws.
4. Employees should always present themselves in a professional manner and exercise good judgment relative to any information posted or any sites linked to the employee's social media network page or blog.
5. Employees must recognize that statements or innuendo publicly displayed on the Internet may have negative ramifications on an individual's position as a role model for students of the district.
6. Employees may not use or post the district logo, motto, slogan, mascot, or other district branding without permission from the superintendent or designee.

Employees may not post any school-related images on any social media network without permission from the superintendent or designee.

If information is posted on a social media network that evidences that the employee has engaged in conduct in violation of applicable federal and state law or district policies, the district may take disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The district reserves the right to monitor employee comments and postings to the extent permitted by law. Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose the existence of and to provide the district with access to an employee's website, web log, or other personal social media network as part of an employment selection, promotion, disciplinary process, or investigation.



**LEGAL REFERENCE:**

Idaho Code Section 33-512 – Governance of Schools

**ADOPTED:**

**AMENDED:**

**FIRST READING: May 21, 2014**

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