

Document Status: Draft Update

General Personnel

5:125 Personal Technology and Social Media; Usage and Conduct

Introduction

The District recognizes the increasingly important role that technology plays in the educational process as well as in the personal lives of the students, their families, and District employees. This policy is intended to foster a thoughtful, responsible use of social media and related technological communication tools in a way that does not disrupt, create unnecessary distractions to or adversely impact the educational process or the interpersonal relationships among the students, faculty, and staff.

Definitions

Includes - Means “includes without limitation” or “includes, but is not limited to.”

Social media - Media for social interaction, using highly accessible web-based and/or mobile technologies that allow users to share content and/or engage in interactive communication through online communities. These technologies include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Threads, Instagram, Snapchat, Discord, PRESSPlus1 Tik Tok);
2. Blogging;
3. Micro blogging sites (e.g., Twitter);
4. Video clips and Podcasts (e.g., YouTube); and
5. Discussion forums.

Personal technology - Any device that is not owned or leased by the District or otherwise authorized for District use and: (1) transmits sounds, images, text, messages, videos, or electronic information, (2) electronically records, plays, or stores information, or (3) accesses the Internet, or private communication or information networks. This includes computers, tablets, smartphones, smartwatches, PRESSPlus2 and other devices.

Usage and Conduct

All District employees who use personal technology and/or social media shall:

1. Adhere to the high standards for **Professional and Appropriate Conduct** required by policy 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest* at all times, regardless of the ever-changing social media and personal technology platforms available. This includes District employees posting images or private information about themselves or others in a manner accessible to students and other employees that is inappropriate as defined by policies 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*; 5:100, *Staff Development Program*; 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*; 6:235, *Access to Electronic Networks*; and 7:20, *Harassment of Students Prohibited*; and the Ill. Code of

Educator Ethics, [23 Ill.Admin.Code §22.20](#).

2. Use a District-provided or supported method whenever possible to communicate with students and their parents/guardians. Employees shall discourage students from making contact through the employee's personal technology or social media. Repeated attempts by a student to make such contact shall be reported to the employee's supervisor.
3. Not interfere with or disrupt the educational or working environment, or the delivery of education or educational support services.
4. Inform their immediate supervisor if a student initiates inappropriate contact with them via any form of personal technology or social media.
5. Report instances of suspected abuse or neglect discovered through the use of social media or personal technology pursuant to a school employee's obligations under policy 5:90, *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting*.
6. Not disclose confidential information, including but not limited to school student records (e.g., student work, photographs of students, names of students, or any other personally identifiable information about students) or personnel records, in compliance with policy 5:130, *Responsibilities Concerning Internal Information*. For District employees, proper approval may include implied consent under the circumstances.
7. Refrain from using the District's logos without permission and follow Board policy 5:170, *Copyright*, and all District copyright compliance procedures.
8. Use personal technology and social media for personal purposes only during non-work times or hours. Any duty-free use must occur during times and places that the use will not interfere with job duties or otherwise be disruptive to the school environment or its operation.
9. Assume all risks associated with the use of personal technology and social media at school or school-sponsored activities, including students' viewing of inappropriate Internet materials through the District employee's personal technology or social media. The Board expressly disclaims any responsibility for imposing content filters, blocking lists, or monitoring of its employees' personal technology and social media.
10. Be subject to remedial and any other appropriate disciplinary action for violations of this policy ranging from prohibiting the employee from possessing or using any personal technology or social media at school to dismissal and/or indemnification of the District for any losses, costs, or damages, including reasonable attorney fees, incurred by the District relating to, or arising out of, any violation of this policy.

Superintendent Responsibilities

The Superintendent shall:

1. Inform District employees about this policy.
2. Direct Building Principals to annually:
 - a. Inform their building staff about the importance of maintaining high standards in their school relationships.
 - b. Remind their building staff that those who violate Board policy will be subject to remedial and any other appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
3. Build awareness of this policy with students, parents, and the community.
4. Ensure that neither the District, nor anyone on its behalf, commits an act prohibited by the Right to Privacy in the Workplace Act, [820 ILCS 55/10](#); i.e., the *Facebook Password Law*.
5. Periodically review this policy and any implementing procedures with District employee representatives and electronic network system administrator(s) and present proposed changes to the Board.

LEGAL REF.:

[105 ILCS 5/21-23](#) and [5/21-23a](#).

[775 ILCS 5/5A-102](#), Ill. Human Rights Act.

[820 ILCS 55/10](#), Right to Privacy in the Workplace Act.

[23 Ill.Admin.Code §22.20](#), Code of Ethics for Ill. Educators.

[Garcetti v. Ceballos](#), 547 U.S. 410 (2006).

[Pickering v. High School Dist. 205](#), 391 U.S. 563 (1968).

Mayer v. Monroe County Community School Corp., 474 F.3d 477 (7th Cir. 2007).

CROSS REF.: 4:165 (Awareness and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Grooming Behaviors), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 5:100 (Staff Development Program), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest), 5:130 (Responsibilities Concerning Internal Information), 5:150 (Personnel Records), 5:170 (Copyright), 5:200 (Terms and Conditions of Employment and Dismissal), 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:340 (Student Records)

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PRESSPlus Comments

PRESSPlus 1. Updated for continuous improvement. **Issue 117, October 2024**

PRESSPlus 2. Updated for continuous improvement. **Issue 117, October 2024**