



STAFF EXPRESSION

The Mead School Board believes the district has an interest in maintaining an orderly and effective environment for both work and learning, while balancing employees' First Amendment rights to freedom of expression and diverse viewpoints and beliefs. When employees speak within their official capacity, their expression represents the district and may be regulated. The First Amendment protects a public employee's speech when the employee is speaking as an individual citizen on a matter of public concern. Even so, employee expression that has an adverse impact on district operations and/or negatively impacts an employee's ability to perform their job for the district may still result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Staff expression includes the performance of job responsibilities and how they represent the district in their use of district email accounts, school district buildings, district property, classrooms, and how they present themselves to students.

The procedure that accompany this Policy will adhere to this policy and specify district standards for staff expression, including the conditions under which a staff member can participate in written or non-verbal expression. Any violation of this Policy or adopted Procedure may result in disciplinary action.

Cross References: 2340 - Religious-Related Activities and Practices

Legal References:

- RCW 41.06.250 Political activities
- RCW 42.17A.555 Use of public office or agency facilities in campaigns - Prohibition - Exceptions
- RCW 42.17A.635 Legislative activities of state agencies, other units of government, elective officials, employees

Adopted: **December 8, 2025**



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Employees are expected to express themselves in accordance with the following standards.

Classroom Decor and Displays

The classroom learning environment plays a crucial role in shaping the culture and climate we strive to create in our schools. More specifically, classroom decor and displays should support district curriculum and learning objectives, and should serve to enhance an educational environment in which all students are valued and supported, regardless of their personal views and beliefs. Out of respect for the diversity of personal beliefs represented in the school community, classroom decor and displays should contribute to and not distract from a welcoming school or classroom environment. To this end, 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:

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.

To ensure that classroom decor and displays do not contravene or undermine the district's mission or message or unnecessarily distract from the learning environment, staff may display the following in their classrooms:

- The United States and Washington State flags.
- District or school flags, banners, or posters, including school teams.
- Displays that are used as a routine part of the approved curriculum for that classroom or as a learning aid, like the periodic table of elements, mathematical equations, the United States or Washington State constitutions, and motivational posters.
- Displays used as part of a temporary unit of instruction within the approved curriculum, like a picture of Anne Frank while reading *The Diary of a Young Girl* or another country's flag while studying that country.
- Displays that denote recognition of achievement by the district, school, or class with the approval of the building principal or designee.
- Displays promoting post-secondary educational opportunities, including posters or flags for colleges and universities.
- Student artwork displayed temporarily, if doing so doesn't violate other district policies and procedures.

- Classroom activity photos, consistent with applicable law and other district policies and procedures.
- Content-neutral decorations, like colorful borders or curtains.

Staff are prohibited from using decor or displays to advocate for or promote their personal beliefs (whether those beliefs are political, social, religious, etc.).

Administrators will uniformly enforce these rules.

Expression at Work and Using District Resources

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 use in the course of employment, and other such channels of staff messaging are thus subject to these expectations:

It is permissible for staff to use such channels of communication only for messaging that is consistent with district policy and procedure and is:

- curricular; or
- approved as the district's official position and message; or
- context-appropriate civil personal expression.

It is never permissible for staff to use such channels of communication for messaging that is:

- obscene, lewd, or vulgar;
- libelous or slanderous;
- in violation of district policies on bullying, harassment, or intimidation;
- in violation of the district's policies on nondiscrimination;
- promoting or opposing electoral candidates, campaigns, political parties, or ballot propositions;
- proselytizing or disparaging religious or irreligious beliefs; or
- otherwise in violation of district policy or procedure.

Controversial issues and materials should be addressed as part of the curriculum consistent with district policy 2331, 2020, 2340, 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.

The district reserves the right to specifically direct or limit any particular staff messaging that is subject to these expectations.

Expression Outside of Work

The private and personal life of any employee, including participation in political activities, is not a matter of concern or attention to the district unless it adversely affects the employee's performance of their 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.

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.

Adopted: December 8, 2025