

Recommended Practices for Use of Social Media Sites, Including Personal Sites

Think Before Posting

Privacy does not exist in the world of social media, therefore the District recommends that employees consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known or how that may reflect on the poster, the District, or its patrons. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created and comments can be easily forwarded or copied. If you would not say it at a Board Meeting or to a member of the media or a colleague, consider the propriety of posting it online.

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.

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.

Be Respectful

Posts should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster, colleagues, the District, and its students, patrons, and employees.

Remember Your Audience

Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes students, fellow employees, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not unnecessarily alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

Contact with Students

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. In order to avoid the appearance of partiality or impropriety, all electronic communications with students

should be through the official District e-mail or your work phone. Do not list current students as friends on social media sites, do not give students your personal e-mail address or phone number, and do not text individual students.

Keep Personal and Professional Use Separate

Staff members who decide to engage in personal 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. Such uses will be considered a violation of District policy and may result in disciplinary action. The District reserves the right to monitor communications transmitted and received through the District network. This may include social media messages and updates sent to a District e-mail account.

District Social Media Sites

Notify the District: Employees that have or would like to start a school social media page should contact their Superintendent or designee. All District pages must have an appointed employee who is identified as being responsible for content. Districts should outline the duties of the employee responsible for the site, including how often the site must be checked for comments and who is allowed to post to the site. Superintendents should be aware of the content on the site, arrange for periodic monitoring of the site, and for the receipt and addressing of any complaints about the content on the site. The Superintendent reserves the right to shut down or discontinue the site if he or she believes it is in the best overall interest of the school district.

Have a Plan: Districts should consider their messages, audiences, and goals, as well as their strategy for keeping information on social media sites up to date, accurate, and in the best interest of the students.

Protect the District Voice: Posts on District affiliated social media sites should protect the District's voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Carefully consider the naming of pages or accounts, the selecting of pictures or icons, compliance with District policy, state, and federal laws with regard to student and employee confidentiality, and the determination of content.

Procedure History:

Revised on: 08-21-2017

Approved on: 08-21-2017