

STAFF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

This policy applies to all social media activities by district employees, including but not limited to the use of blogs, forums, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube) and any other web-based communications on publicly available sites. It is the Amery Board of Education's intention to use these types of electronic communications as a way to further the goals of the District, while protecting staff members, students and the District from harmful incidents.

This policy is designed for the protection of students and staff, including employees and volunteers, of the School District of Amery and will be evaluated and revised as determined by school administration.

When participating in social media activities, including off duty and off premises, such activities must not violate any Board policies or otherwise interfere with the employee's or co-worker's job performance. The Board expects all employees to exercise professionalism and good judgment in any social media activities. Staff members must carefully consider the very public forum of social media platforms and act in a way that properly represents both a professional reputation and the reputation of the School District of Amery.

Professional conduct, principles and responsibilities in connection with the use of social media tools and all other electronic media include the following:

1. Any time a staff member is participating in a technology-facilitated communication, collaboration, exercise, or other activity in connection with their responsibilities as a school district employee, the employee is expected to conduct him/herself in a courteous and professional manner that is consistent with the District's general rules and expectations for appropriate workplace conduct and acceptable use of technology.
2. Maintaining professional boundaries in all forms of technology-facilitated communication with students - including but not limited to the consistent use of a formal, courteous, and professional tone and limiting such communication to exchanges that are within the scope of the employee's job responsibilities - is vital to maintaining appropriate professional relationships with students and to maintaining the community's trust in the schools.
3. All District-provided or District-authorized technology tools and applications are provided to further the mission, vision, goals and policies of the District; and, as such, they remain under the ultimate control of the Board and District administration at all times.
4. When such tools and applications are used in connection with student learning, they shall be considered an extension of the District's educational curriculum. Employees shall use such tools and applications in connection with and to accomplish their assigned duties and responsibilities, and not as a forum for self-directed personal expression.
5. Employees shall not have an expectation of privacy in connection with their use of any District-related form of electronic media. When "off duty" or when otherwise using technology resources in their private capacities away from the District, employees are held to the same standards in their public use of electronic media (including but not limited to social media) as they are held to in connection with their other off-duty, public conduct. Where there is a sufficient nexus between off-duty conduct and an employee's work-related role and responsibilities, there can be employment-related consequences for off-duty conduct that violates the law, that violates District policy or other work directives, that is harmful to persons in the school community, or that otherwise interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his/her job duties. Accordingly, as an example, each employee is responsible for all content appearing on all personal websites and social media accounts maintained or controlled by the employee, and for establishing and monitoring privacy settings on any personal websites and other electronic accounts that are appropriate for the nature of content provided therein.

6. In the event that any employee proposes a use of any electronic media application or tool for instructional purposes that is prohibited by current policy or by current administrative rules, the employee may request a meeting with the District Administrator and Technology Coordinator to consider alternative options or the possibility of pursuing a modification or exemption from the applicable policy or rule to enable an innovative and viable project.
7. Confidential information, including but not limited to student information, is to be protected at all times and may only be disclosed pursuant to District policy or Wisconsin statute. If a staff member believes that confidential information may have been revealed, he/she is required to notify his/her building Principal or Supervisor immediately.
8. No employee shall hold themselves out as representing the School Board or the District as a whole in any technology-facilitated activity unless they have been expressly assigned that role by their supervisor. Staff members will receive consent from the District Administrator prior to creating any social media account, blog or website intended to represent the School District of Amery. It is important to protect the District's brand, ensure certain brand standards and content guidelines are maintained, and ensure any new accounts fit overall communications and education standards established by the District.
9. Staff members will not use media sites to harass, threaten, libel, malign, defame, disparage or discriminate against members of the school community, including but not limited to students, parents and/or guardians, co-workers or the administration or Board. This section is not intended to prohibit employees from engaging speech protected by law.
10. Staff members will not use their District email address on social networking sites and while engaging in other off-duty social media activities.
11. Staff members must exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media platforms. Staff members should not send permission-based 'friend' or 'follower' requests to students and should use discretion before accepting any 'friend' or 'follower' requests from students. It is the District's recommendation that if an employee accepts 'friend' or 'follower' requests from students that all such requests should be accepted, and not selectively limit their interactions to what could be perceived as a few preferred individuals.
12. Staff members must ensure that all online dialogue with students is professional and must immediately report to their Principal or Supervisor any inappropriate communication received from a student.
13. The District recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances where an employee's interaction with a student is the result of extra-curricular activities such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, religious organizations or other similar relationships.

CROSS REF.: #522.4, Staff Conduct/Code of Ethics
#529, Staff Use of Social Media
#821, School-Sponsored Information Program
#823.1, Retention/Disposal of School District Records

ADOPTED: April 18, 2011
REVISED: January 16, 2017