

## STAFF USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

### **Statement of Use**

The District promotes all staff to utilize social media tools and other electronic communication to teach, communicate, and bring the real world into the classroom. It supports uses of current technology in ways that promote, support, and maintain strong, appropriate relationships between staff and students.

Staff is encouraged to use District-approved accounts, such as classroom communication apps, to communicate with students. The use of personal networking pages is discouraged. To protect all parties, it is important that staff, students, and parents understand the boundaries of professional decorum in the use of ever-changing on-line, digital learning possibilities. Staff must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process and in ways that protect students and staff members alike from inappropriate use or the appearance of inappropriate use.

The District's expectation is that staff will use maturity, common sense, and sound professional judgment in all interactions with students, parents, and community members. District employees entrusted with the responsibility of posting photographs/videos of staff, students or community members within school district, staff-maintained official social media pages are required to verify whether parents have approved their student's likeness be shared publically. This information can be found in the student's record on file in their respective school office under the Release of Student Directory Information form.

### **Student Photographs/Videos**

The Waterloo Schools notifies all parents of current students officially through our Release of Student Directory Information and student handbooks that students are potentially subject to having their likeness displayed on our official school website ([www.waterlooschools.org](http://www.waterlooschools.org)) and other school district official social media accounts, solely for educational purposes. Student photographs/videos may also be posted within our school district, staff-maintained official social media pages and accounts unless parents mark they do not want their child's likeness to be displayed at school, in any school publication, or in any media or electronic coverage related to school. This option can be found on the Release of Student Directory Information Form. A student who chooses to participate in any extracurricular activity where the public is invited to attend may have this or her likeness shared publically via electronic or social media coverage.

### **Practical Guidelines**

1. District employees are encouraged to not "friend" or follow their students on any personal social media outlet.
2. Staff members are encouraged to use District-provided accounts to create a classroom presence or site for legitimate educational purposes (separate from personal sites).
  - a. District staff can use social media outlets for educational purposes as long as they use a separate account for personal use.

3. Postings that contain content that disrupts the educational program are strictly prohibited. Examples include, but are not limited to content that:
  - a. is sexually provocative or flirtatious in nature;
  - b. exhibits or advocates for use of drugs and alcohol;
  - c. would be defined by a reasonable person as obscene, racist, or sexist;
  - d. promotes illicit, illegal, or unethical activity;
  - e. violates the district's affirmative action and/or bullying and harassment policies.

### **Security**

Waterloo Schools reserves the right to remove followers from our official social media pages for any reason including inappropriate commenting, inappropriate pictures or video posting, etc. By interacting with any Waterloo Schools official social media pages, depending on your personal account and privacy settings, you may be subject to having your profile picture, name, and comments visible to the public. Waterloo Schools does not take responsibility for such actions because such settings are only within the control of the account holder that is a follower of our page, not the District.

### **Legitimate Educational Purposes**

As used in this policy, legitimate educational purposes include:

1. Answering academic inquiries regarding homework, other classroom work or assignments;
2. Scheduling appointments for school-related conferences and/or extra help;
3. Clarifying classroom expectations and/or assignments;
4. Notifications related to classroom, club or sports schedules, safety, attendance, events, trips, assignments, and/or deadlines.

### **Consequences**

Failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct can lead to discipline up to and including suspension and dismissal from employment. When inappropriate use of electronic contacts is suspected, administrators will immediately investigate. Misconduct that rises to the level of criminal activity will be reported to law enforcement. Misconduct that violates professional ethics will be reported to the Board of Educational Examiners.

### **Implementation**

This policy shall be contained in all staff handbooks and posted on the District website under our policies section.

Legal Ref.: Iowa Code §§ 274.1, .2, .6, .7; 278.1(9); 279.8; 594A (2013).

ADOPTED: 2/14/11  
4/9/18

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