

## **2297 Employee Use of Social Media 2297**

Employees are to be aware that they may face disciplinary action when an employee's use of personal social media involves any one of the following:

1. Interferes with, disrupts or undermines the effective operation of the School District;
2. Is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory, threatening, or other similar inappropriate communications;
3. Creates a hostile work environment;
4. Breaches confidentiality obligations of School District employees; or
5. Violates the law, Board policies and/or other school rules and regulations.

### **A. Rules Concerning Personal Social Media Activity**

1. An employee's mention, discussion or reference of the Milford School Board, the Milford School District or the District's individual schools, programs, or teams on personal social networking sites are not official School District communications. Such communications are the personal views of the employee. An employee who does mention, discuss or reference the Milford School Board, Milford School District or the District's individual schools, programs, or teams is solely responsible for ensuring his or her views are not interpreted as official communications by the Milford School Board or Milford School District.
2. Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students. For example, on Facebook, absent a non-school relationship (e.g., relative, family friend, or personal friendship unrelated to school), it is not appropriate for a teacher or administrator to "friend" a student or otherwise establish special relationships with selected students through personal social media. It is not appropriate for an employee to give students access to personal postings unrelated to school.
3. Unless given written consent, employees may not imply that their site is officially associated with individual schools, programs or teams of the School District.
4. Employees are individually responsible for their personal communications through social media.
5. Employees are required to comply with all of the Board's policies and procedures with respect to the use of computer equipment, networks, or electronic devices when accessing social media sites. Any access to personal social media activities while on school property or using School District equipment must comply with those policies, and may not interfere with an employee's duties at work.

6. All communications through personal social media must comply with the School Board's policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If an employee is considering sharing information and is unsure about the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with his/her Superintendent/designee prior to communicating such information.
7. Employees may not post a link to a personal social media page on the District's website or the websites of individual schools, programs or teams, or post District material on a social media site or webpage that may interfere with or disrupt the operation of the schools, is inappropriate, creates a hostile work environment, breaches confidentiality, or violates law and/or School Board policy.

## **B. Rules Concerning District-Sponsored Social Media Activity**

1. Employees must obtain the written permission of their Superintendent/designee In order to use social media sites as an educational tool, or to support co-curricular activities or programs of the School District.
2. If an employee wishes to use Facebook or other similar social media site to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club, activity, organization, or sports team, the employee must also comply with the following rules:
  - a. The employee must set up the club, as a group list which will be "closed" (e.g. membership in the group is limited to students, parents and appropriate school personnel), and "monitored" (e.g. the employee had the ability to access and supervise communications on the social media site).
  - b. When Facebook, or similar social media sites, is used as the social media site, members will not be established as "friends", but as members of the group list. When other social media sites are used, the employee will establish a similar parameter on the basis of the functionality of the social media site utilized.
  - c. Anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the site may only gain access by the permission of the employee (e.g. teacher, administrator, supervisor or coach). Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the employee invites them and allows them to join.
  - d. Parents shall be permitted to access any page that their child has been invited to join.
  - e. Access to the page shall only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization or team.
  - f. The employee responsible for the page will monitor it regularly.
  - g. The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any page established by the employee for a school-related purpose.

- h. Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such District-sponsored social media activity.
3. All communications through District-sponsored social media must comply with the School Board's policies concerning confidentiality. If an employee is considering sharing information and is unsure about the confidential nature of the information, the employee shall consult with his/her Superintendent/designee prior to communicating such information.
4. Employees may not use District-sponsored social media communications for non-school private financial gain, political, commercial, advertisement, proselytizing, or solicitation purposes.
5. Employees may not use District-sponsored social media communications in a manner that misrepresents views as those of the School Board, individual school or School District, or in a manner that could be construed as such.

### **C. Disciplinary Consequences**

Violation of the Board's policy concerning the use of social media or related administrative regulations may lead to discipline up to and including the termination of employment, consistent with state and federal law.

### **D. Definitions**

Social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and MySpace.

#### References:

U.S. Constitution, Amend I

Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520.

Adopted: 8/2013