

**PARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #6
BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY**

Code: IJNDC

**EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES,
INCLUDING PERSONAL SITES**

As a means to recognize the professional obligations of any staff member of the district and to avoid any improprieties or the appearance of impropriety within the framework of staff/student relationships, each staff member should carefully consider appropriate responsibility and duties regarding all interaction with students, personally and professionally, each day of educational contact or socially and/or interactively through the use of electronic means provided by the district.

PROFESSIONALISM, STUDENT CONTACT, AND TECHNOLOGY

The district has provided technology to staff for the purpose of facilitating student learning and providing the best educational experience possible for district students. The district recognizes that personal contact with a student will and may occur in the district's classrooms, within the district's activity programs and socially. The district further recognizes that student contact may occur based upon the electronic messaging capacity provided by the district. The district has provided technology for such contacts and encourages staff to use technology for educationally appropriate purposes related to student contact whether in school, in activities or in social settings.

Recognizing there will be professional as well as personal contact with students, staff must always act as professional representatives of the district, acknowledging that they have a special and privileged responsibility to interact with students in a professional manner, no matter the circumstances.

Nothing in this policy prohibits district staff from the use of education websites and/or use of district-based social networking websites created for appropriate curricular, co-curricular activities, or social contact where that may occur.

Failure to maintain a professional relationship with students, both inside and outside of a classroom setting, including interaction via social networking websites of any nature, e-mailing, texting, or other electronic methods could result in the reporting of such conduct to the Professional Teaching Standards Board by District's administration and the imposition of disciplinary action up to and including termination.

RULES CONCERNING DISTRICT-SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

PROTECT THE DISTRICT VOICE

Posts on District-affiliated social media sites must protect the District's voice by remaining professional in tone and message. Staff must appropriately consider the naming of pages or accounts, the selection of pictures or icons, compliance with District policy, state, and federal laws with full regard for student and employee confidentiality.

Employees who have or would like to start a district social media page must contact their administrator. All district pages must have an appointed employee who is identified as being responsible for content. The appropriate administrator must be aware of the content on the site, arrange for periodic monitoring of the site, and for the receipt and response to complaints about the content on the site. The superintendent reserves the right to shut down or discontinue the site if he/she believes it is in the best overall interest of the students.

When constructing a district-based social media site, the employee must comply with the following:

1. All district communication tools must have a minimum of three staff members with administrative access when possible.
2. The employee must set up mechanisms for delivering information to students that are members of the group who do not have access to the social media site via electronic means.
3. The public shall be permitted to access any district-affiliated public site. (Administrator approved team; clubs and class specific sites may be limited to parents, guardians and students.) Parents shall report any communications they believe to be inappropriate by students or school personnel to District administration.
4. The employee responsible for the social media site will monitor it regularly.

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5. The employee's supervisor shall be permitted access to any district sponsored social media site established by the employee.
6. Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional behavior within boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such District-sponsored social media activity. This includes maintaining a separation between the school activity pages and employees' personal social media profiles and pages.
7. Postings made to the site must comply with all other District policies pertaining to District web sites, Internet usage, and technology, etc.

PERSONAL SITES

The board respects the right of employees to use social media as a medium of self-expression on their personal time. School employees remain subject to applicable state and federal laws, board policies, administrative regulations and applicable code of ethics, even if communicating with others concerning personal and private matters. If an employee's use of social media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are responsible for the content on their social media sites, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends or members of the public who can access the employee's site, and for Web links on the employee's site. Employees should take reasonable precautions, such as using available security settings, to restrict students from viewing their personal information on social media web sites and to prevent students from accessing materials that are not age-appropriate or suitable for viewing or reading by a district student or any student under the age of eighteen.

If you identify yourself as a District employee online, it should be clear that the views expressed, posted, or published are personal views, not necessarily those of the District, its Board, employees or agents.

Opinions expressed by staff on a social networking website have the potential to be disseminated far beyond the speaker's desire or intention, and could undermine the public perception of fitness of the individual to educate students, and thus undermine teaching effectiveness. In this way, the effect of the expression and publication of such opinions could potentially lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member, up to and including termination or nonrenewal of the contract of employment.

POSTING TO SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Employees who use social media for personal purposes must be aware that the content they post may be viewed by anyone with the ability to access the site, including students, parents and community members. Employees shall observe the following principles when communicating through social media:

1. Employees shall not post confidential information about students, employees or school system business. Employees may not post identifiable images of a student or student's family without permission from the student and the student's parent or legal guardian.
2. Employees should accept that all interactions with students through social sites can be called into public process if needed.
3. Employees shall be professional in all Internet postings related to or referencing the school system, students and other employees.
4. Employees should not use profane, pornographic, obscene, indecent, lewd, vulgar or sexually offensive language, pictures or graphics or other communication that could reasonably be anticipated to cause a

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substantial disruption to the school environment.

5. Employees must not use Internet postings to libel or defame the board, individual board members, students or other school employees.
6. Employees shall not use the district's logos or other copyrighted material of the district on personal, non-school affiliated sites for personal monetary gain without express, written consent from the Board.
7. Employees shall not use Internet postings to harass, bully or intimidate other employees or students in violation of district policy.
9. Employees must not post inappropriate content that negatively impacts their ability to perform their jobs.
10. Employees shall not use Internet postings to engage in any other conduct that violates board policy and administrative procedures or state and federal laws.

CONSEQUENCES

School system personnel shall monitor online activities of employees who access the Internet using school technological resources. Additionally, the superintendent or designee may periodically conduct public Internet searches to determine if an employee has engaged in conduct that violates this policy. Any employee who has been found by the superintendent to violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Employees shall not post confidential or proprietary information about the District, its employees, students, agents, or others. The employee shall adhere to all applicable privacy and confidentiality policies adopted by the District or as provided by state or federal law.

**DO NOT USE DISTRICT PROPRIETARY INFORMATION OR STUDENT INFORMATION
WITHOUT APPROPRIATE PERMISSION**

Employees shall not use images, iconography, etc. on personal social media sites, nor shall employees use the District name to promote a product. Employees may not use personal images of students, or student names or data relating to students, absent written authority of the parent of a minor or authority of an adult or emancipated student.

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