

**Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communication**

The Humboldt Community School District recognizes and encourages the use of social media as an educational and communication tool. The District also recognizes that the lines between educational and personal use of social media can be confusing. In all instances it is important that employees and students conduct themselves in such a way that their educational or personal use of social media does not adversely affect their status with the District. Just as the District encourages the use of social media, the District also encourages employees and students to use good and sound practices when using social media.

The purpose of this policy is to establish protocols for the use of social media by employees and students as well as to outline expectations for its use. These protocols are in place regardless of whether access to any social media is through a District-owned computer or other electronic device. For purposes of this policy, “social media” is any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networking websites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Yik Yak, Snap Chat or similar sites now or in the future. In addition, personal web pages or blogs, educational networking sites, email, texting, instant messaging, and other electronic communication fall under this policy as well.

***Expectations for All Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communication:***

- Employees and students should understand and abide by the social media site’s policies and terms of use.
- Employees and students should understand that they are personally responsible for the content they post or otherwise publish on social media. Only predetermined staff members are to act as representatives of or spokespersons for the District.
- Employees and students should not post or otherwise publish content that is deemed defamatory or obscene or which constitutes an incitement to imminent violence or a true threat, or which violates copyright or other intellectual property laws.
- Employees and students should be careful about the type and amount of personal information they provide on social media.
- Employees and students should not post or otherwise publish confidential or protected information about the District, its employees, or students. Disclosure of confidential or protected information may result in liability for invasion of privacy or defamation.
- Employees and students should set and maintain appropriate social networking privacy settings. Be aware that social media sites can change their privacy policies and standards at any time, possibly exposing posts that employees and students believed were private to the public.

***Expectations for Educational Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communication:***

- Employees and students accessing social media or other electronic communication through a District-owned computer or other electronic device or network are subject to applicable laws and District policies and rules regarding acceptable use of such District-owned resources, including, but not limited to, the Districts Acceptable Use Policies(Code No. 401.13, 401.14, 605.6)

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- Employees and students accessing social media or other electronic communication at school are subject to District policies and rules regarding appropriate conduct. It is important to remember that infractions prohibiting certain types of communication, such as bullying and harassment, also apply to electronic communication. Behavior that is inappropriate in face-to-face interactions with others at school should be considered inappropriate online.
- Employees may create a social media site for a school, class, or program only with the prior approval of the District Superintendent or designee. No school logos, mascots, photographs of the facilities, or other such graphic representations or images associated with the District may be used without permission.

***Expectations for Personal Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communication:***

- Employees should carefully consider the pros and cons, potential difficulties, and additional responsibilities that may be involved if they accept current District students as “friends” or “follow” them on social media. Employees are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their electronic communications with students.
- Employees should consider whether a particular posting on social media or other electronic communication puts their professional reputation and effectiveness as a District employee at risk.
- Students should consider that their social media or other electronic communication use may result in disruption at school and the school may need to get involved.
- Employees should be aware that social media activity can impact their employment, such as if that activity is illegal, in violation of board policies, has a negative impact on the efficient operation of the school district, or impacts the ability of an individual to do or return to his/her job. Employees should consider whether a particular posting puts their professional reputation and effectiveness as a District employee at risk.
- Sharing of information via social media that impedes or interferes with an ongoing or current investigation by District officials regarding an employee or student is prohibited.

Employees and students found to have engaged in inappropriate use of social media or other electronic communication may be subject to disciplinary action by the District, up to and including termination and expulsion.

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