

STAFF PERSONNEL

Series 400

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSIBILITY No. 401.14R1

District Professional Use of Social Media

An employee using social media in his or her professional capacity as an employee of the District and/or pursuant to his or her official duties should be honest about whom he or she is, and be thoughtful and respectful when submitting or posting messages. In addition, employees using social media for such purposes should adhere to the following guidelines:

- If you are participating on a social networking website, web page, and/or blog for District-related business, you may do so on District approved sites and only for academic/professional use. The Director of Communications must give approval.
- If you are participating on a social networking website, tool, app, web page, and/or blog for a District-related athletic team, activity, or classroom, you may do so on District approved sites. The Director of Communications must give approval. The account set up, username, and password will be kept by the communications department.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as a District employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at the District.
- Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and therefore an extension of your professional life and your classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the classroom wall, it is inappropriate to put it online.
- Remember that blogs, messaging/chatting, wikis, podcasts, and any online tool are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- The “johnston.k12.ia.us” address attached to your name and/or email implies that you are acting on behalf of the District and, as such, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner.
- Any information shared via social media regarding the business of the District, whether using personal or District equipment, may be considered a public record. All information communicated through or maintained on the District’s system is subject to being monitored or inspected at any time.
- Do not submit or post confidential information about the District, its students, alumni, or employees. You should assume information about a student is protected from disclosure by both federal law (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and state law (Iowa Code Section 22.7(1)).
- Before posting photographs, audio and video, permission should be sought from the participants, to ensure compliance with the district’s media permissions procedures.
- Keep in mind that, by their very nature, social media such as social networking websites/tools, web pages, messaging/chatting, blogs, and micro-blogging are not truly private. To minimize unintended disclosure of information, you should set and maintain your social networking privacy settings at the most restrictive level.

- When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.
- Proofread content before you submit or post messages. Remember that you are writing for publication, even if it is just for a social networking site. Refrain from making unsubstantiated statements and avoid careless comments, such as ‘research shows’ unless you also provide full citation of the research.

Personal Use of Social Media

The District recognizes the prevalence of social media used for personal purposes and acknowledges that its employees have the right, to speak out on matters of public concern. However, the District also has the right to respond to an employee’s use of social media in other circumstances, such as when the personal use of social media interferes with the employee’s ability to perform his or her duties or affects the District’s efforts to provide educational services. Accordingly, it is essential that employees conduct themselves in such a way that their personal use of social media does not adversely affect their position with the District. In addition, employees using social media for such purposes should adhere to the following guidelines:

- If you are participating on a social networking website/tools, web pages, messaging/chatting, and/or blog for personal use, you may identify yourself as an employee of the District. However, you must state that you are expressing your own opinion, not that of the District. You will be held fully responsible for your activities.
- If you identify yourself as a District employee, remember that your actions will reflect not only on you but the District as well.
- Never pretend to be someone else and submit or post information concerning the District.
- Do not use the District’s school logo or mascots, photographs, or any other such graphic representations or images, or link any personal page on a social networking website or other personal web page to any District website or material.
- If you submit or post information or comments that are not related to the District, your activities may still result in professional repercussions. Such actions include, but are not limited to, posting of photographs or information which violates federal or state law and regulations and/or District policies and rules.
- Keep in mind that you do not have control of what others submit or post on social networking websites and other micro-blogs; therefore, be aware that your conduct in your private life may affect your professional life. Be vigilant about what others post about you on your page and, if necessary, take steps to remove comments that pose a risk to you or the District.
- Employees must maintain professional relationships with current students enrolled in the District. It is inappropriate for District employees to communicate with current students enrolled in the District through social media, such as through electronic messaging or any other social networking websites. This includes becoming “friends” on such sites or otherwise allowing students to access your site page to communicate. You should refrain from engaging in social interaction with current students enrolled in the district through personal pages on social networking websites and other personal web pages or personal electronic messaging.
- Employees may use academic/classroom web pages and social networking tools that are approved by the District and used solely for school-related purposes.

You should notify parents of your intention to use this media to communicate with students and the intended purpose of such communications. All legal and ethical expectations for appropriate employee/student relationships must be followed.

- You should refrain from providing your personal contact information to students currently enrolled in the District. You should only provide your official District email address and/or District telephone number as a way to communicate with students or parents regarding District business.
- During the workday, you should refrain from participating on any personal social media.
- District equipment should not be used for personal media access/use, whether on or off campus.

Disclaimers

- Any statement of personal belief found on electronic networks or services is implicitly understood to be representative of the author's individual point of view, and not that of Johnston Community School District, the Board of Education, its administrators, teachers, staff or the participating school.
- Classroom web sites and blogs do not require a disclaimer, but teachers are expected to moderate content contributed by students.

Copyright and Fair Use

- Respect and abide by copyright and fair use guidelines.
- A hyperlink to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarize by giving credit where it is due. When using a hyperlink, be sure that the content is appropriate and adheres to the Johnston Community School District Instructional Materials Policy.

Profiles and Identity

- Remember your association and responsibility with the Johnston Community School District. If you identify yourself as a Johnston Community School District employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students. How you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.
- No personal addresses or phone numbers should appear on any school website/social tool.
- Be cautious how you set up your profile, biography, avatar, images, etc.
- When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself, make sure you select a school-appropriate image. Remember not to use copyrighted images.
- Internet search engines can find information years after it was originally posted. Comments can be forwarded or copied and archival systems can save information even if you delete a post. You should assume that a message or image which is posted or communicated can never be completely deleted.
- Use of Johnston, J, and/or dragon images, as part of representing district groups/classroom etc., must be the district-approved logos.

Social Bookmarking

- Be aware that others can view the sites that you bookmark.
- Be aware of words used to *tag* or describe the bookmark.

Electronic Messaging/Chatting

- Johnston Community School District employees are required to get authorization to have instant messaging programs downloaded on their school devices, including instant messaging programs that are available through web interfaces with no download.
- Avatar images and profile information should follow the same guidelines as the above *Profiles and Identity* section.

Disciplinary Action

Employees who fail to comply with this policy or who make other inappropriate use of social media may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. If an employee has any questions about the application of this policy, he or she should consult his or her supervisor.

Date Approved: November 19, 2012

Last Date Reviewed: November 21, 2016

Last Date Revised: September 10, 2018