

Union Public Schools considers an employee's use of any electronic media for the purpose of communicating with a student, parent, colleague, or stakeholder to be an extension of the employee's workplace responsibilities. Accordingly, the Board of Education expects employees to use professional judgment and appropriate decorum when using any social media in this fashion. District administrators may require an employee to provide access to any websites used by him or her for communication with students or parents and to produce copies of any electronic communication with students or parents, including text messages, web page posts, etc.

Social Networking Websites

Many social networking websites are not accessible on the district network because they have been blocked. If employees, including teachers, would like to request that a website be made accessible to use for teaching and learning, that person shall submit a written request to the Executive Director of Instructional Technology for review, identifying the online tools to be used and the instructional purpose in using them.

All district employees shall conduct themselves in a professional manner regarding use of social networking websites, even when done in their personal time, using personal property. Employees may not submit or post confidential or protected information about the district, its students, alumni, or employees.

- A. Inappropriate contact with students or parents is prohibited;
- B. Employees may not post items on social networking websites with sexual content if they are identifying themselves as a district employee;
- C. Employees may not post items exhibiting or advocating illegal activity if they are identifying themselves as a district employee;
- D. Online social networking during work hours is restricted to work-related activity.

District employees should be aware that people classified as "friends" on social networking sites have the ability to download and share the employee's information and photographs with others. Employees are strongly encouraged to set and maintain social networking privacy settings at the most restrictive level.

Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines

Employees and students must respect copyright and fair use guidelines when posting material on social network sites, even those websites used and accessed for educational and classroom purposes.

Hyperlinking to outside sources is recommended. Do not plagiarize; give credit where credit is due to the sources of material. When hyperlinking to other sites and media, be sure that the hyperlinked content is appropriate and consistent with these guidelines. Be aware that photographs taken by professional photographers cannot be scanned and used on the Internet without the photographer's permission, even if they are photos purchased from the photographer.

Text and Instant Messaging

District employees are discouraged from sending any text or instant message to a student individually. When possible, all text and instant messages to students should be sent to the entire school, class, team, club, or organization. Employees may text or instant message an individual student when educationally necessary. Employees shall not send messages that are personal in nature and unrelated to the business of Union or that contain confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information.

Penalties

Both employees and students face the possibility of disciplinary action, up to and including student suspension and termination of employment, for failing to abide by district policies when accessing and using social media.

District-Associated Sites and Use of Union Logos

The following applies to district-associated social media sites or use of Union logos on social media sites:

- A. The formation of any web page representing Union, conducting Union business, or using a district name/logo to associate itself with the district, must receive written permission from the Superintendent or designee, the Chief Communications Officer.
- B. Those sites not part of the district network but permitted to use a district name or logo must post the following disclaimer in a prominent position on each web page: "This is not an official site of Union Public Schools. Use of the district's name/logo is with written permission from Union Public Schools."
- C. District websites and social media pages should list a contact and contact information. These sites should represent and promote the district, programs, students, and employees in a professional, positive manner. Before posting, ask yourself if the picture or information you are posting would be embarrassing, slanderous, or threatening if printed on the front page of tomorrow's newspaper.

- D. The Superintendent or designee shall designate those staff persons who have management or administrator access to district-sponsored social media including, but not limited to, the ability to remove content from district-sponsored social media if determined to be inappropriate. Only content that is allowable on the district website is allowable on district-sponsored social media pages unless otherwise authorized by the Superintendent.
- E. District-associated social media pages such as PTA, booster, or activity sponsors' social media pages should have more than one account administrator, and at least one of those should be employed by the district. It is required that, for purposes of Facebook, account administrators shall utilize the FAN PAGE option. A FAN PAGE option allows for more than one administrator and provides flexibility in controlling the information. Questions about how to set that option may be directed to the Union Communications Department.
- F. Communication should be conducted publicly on the Wall in Facebook and on the equivalent public side of any social media.
- G. Facebook "fans" can always comment on postings, and for this reason page administrators should monitor all postings. Only the page administrators should be able to post directly on the Facebook Wall or comment directly on photos.
- H. Information that violates Board of Education policies or local, state, and federal laws may not be posted.
- I. In the event of an inflammatory post—including, but not limited to, profanity or libelous posts—a screen shot should be taken and the post removed immediately. The page administrator should report the incident to the Union Communications Department and, if the page administrator is an employee, to his/her immediate supervisor.
- J. Links to district or district-associated web pages should be curriculum or school related and may not include sites that are primarily political, religious, or commercial for the sake of promoting a particular business, religion, or political view. Links also may not be made to inappropriate sites such as those that are discriminatory or sexually explicit.

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