

Rights, Responsibilities and Duties**Social Networking**

The Board of Education (Board) has a strong commitment to quality education and the well-being of all students, as well as the preservation of North Canaan Elementary School's reputation. The Board believes staff members must establish and maintain public trust and confidence and be committed to protecting all students attending the school district. In support of the Board's strong commitment to the public's trust and confidence, the Board holds all staff members to the highest level of professional responsibility.

Inappropriate conduct outside a staff member's professional responsibilities may determine them as unfit to discharge the duties and functions of their position. Staff members should be advised communications, publications, photographs, and other information appearing on social networking sites deemed inappropriate by the Board could be cause for discipline up to and including termination of employment consistent with state and federal law.

Staff members are advised to be concerned and aware such conduct deemed inappropriate may include, but is not limited to, communications and/or publications using emails, text-messaging, social networking sites, or any other form of electronic communication that is directed and/or available to students or for public display or publication.

While the Board respects the right of staff members to use social networking sites, staff members should recognize they are held to a higher standard than the general public with regard to standards of conduct and ethics. It is important that a staff member's use of these sites does not damage the reputation of the school district, employees, students, or their families. Staff members who utilize, post or publish images, photographs, or comments on social networking sites, blogs, or other forms or electronic communication outside their professional responsibilities shall ensure their use, postings, or publications are done with an appropriate level of professionalism and are appropriate conduct for a school staff member. Staff members should exercise care in setting appropriate boundaries between their personal and public online behavior, understanding that what is private in the digital world often has the possibility of becoming public even without their knowledge or consent.

The school district strongly encourages all staff members to carefully review the privacy settings on social networking sites they use and exercise care and good judgment when posting content and information on such sites. Staff members should adhere to the following guidelines, which are consistent with the District's workplace standards on harassment, student relationships, conduct, professional communication, and confidentiality.

When using personal social networking sites, school staff members:

1. Should not make statements that would violate any of the district's policies, including its policies concerning discrimination or harassment;
2. Must uphold the district's value of respect for the individual and avoid making defamatory statements about the school district, employees, students, or their families;
3. May not disclose any confidential information about the school district or confidential information obtained during the course of his/her employment, about any individual(s) or organization, including students and/or their families;

4. Shall not use social networking sites to post any materials of a sexually graphic nature;
5. Shall not use social networking sites to post any materials which promote violence;
6. Shall not use social networking sites that would be detrimental to the mission and function of the District;
7. Are prohibited from using their school district title as well as adding references to the District in any correspondence including, but not limited to, emails, postings, blogs, and social networking sites unless the communication is of an official nature and is serving the mission of the district. This prohibition also includes signature lines and personal email accounts;
8. Shall not post updates to their status on any social networking sites during normal working hours including posting of statements or comments on the social networking sites of others during school time unless it involves a school project. Employees must seek approval from the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee for such use; and
9. Shall not post or publish any information the Superintendent would deem to be inappropriate conduct by a school staff member.

The Policy of this district is to maintain a level of professionalism both during and after the school day. Any publication through any means of electronic communication that is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the District will be deemed a violation of this Policy. If the Board or Superintendent believes that a staff member's activity on any social networking site violates the District's policies, the Board or Superintendent may request that the employee cease such activity. Depending on the severity of the incident, the staff member may be subject to disciplinary action.

This Policy has been developed and adopted by this Board to provide guidance and direction to staff members on how to avoid actual and/or the appearance of inappropriate conduct toward students and/or the community while using social networking sites.

(cf. 4118.5 - Acceptable Computer Network Use)

(cf. 6141.323 - Internet Safety Policy/Filtering)

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

The Freedom of Information Act

[53A-182B](#) Harassment in the first degree.

[31-48d](#) Employees engaged in electronic monitoring required to give prior notice to employees. Exceptions. Civil penalty.

United States Code, Title 20

675 1-6777 Enhancing Education Through Technology Act, Title II, Part D, especially: 6777 Internet safety

United States Code, Title 47

254 Universal service discounts (E-rate)

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 47

54.520 Internet safety policy and technology protection measures, E-rate discounts

U.S. Constitution, 1st Amendment

Connecticut Constitution, Article 1, Sections 3, 4, 14

Adopted: November 10, 2020

NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

North Canaan, Connecticut