

# Board Policy

Code No. 401.13R2

## STAFF SOCIAL MEDIA REGULATION

As part of its efforts to consistently adapt to evolving methods of communication and clearly communicate with its key stakeholders, the Bettendorf Community School District is incorporating digital tools to reach parents, students, alumni, staff and community partners.

The purpose of the District's social media efforts is to facilitate communication between the Bettendorf Community School District and students, parents and the public in furtherance of the District's mission. The District may take actions to regulate the posting of content by users consistent with rules of service (i.e. Facebook) and in accordance with applicable laws, including the removal of prohibited content and/or banishment of users from accessing the page(s).

Information produced and shared by BCSD employees online is a reflection of the entire District and is subject to the District's Acceptable Use Policy. Employees who wish to participate in social media activity are asked to please read these recommendations carefully before posting or commenting on blogs or social media websites (Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.).

### Personal Responsibility

- The Bettendorf Community School District employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.

*Freedom of Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws. Just like e-mail accounts, the district's social networking sites are subject to public records laws and information posted to the site(s) may be requested by any member of the public and may be used in court cases.*

- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.

Free speech protects educators who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that schools and/or districts can intervene if the speech, including online postings, is found to disrupt school operations.

- Employees assume responsibility for content they publish online, whether from a personal or district device, and are encouraged to be mindful that posts may be in the public domain for a long time.
- The lines between public and private domains or personal and professional relationships are often blurred in the digital world. If staff members choose to identify themselves as BCSD employees online they should be mindful of these relationships.
- Remember that blogs, wikis and podcasts are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- When contributing online do not post confidential student information.

- Employees are encouraged to protect their privacy by using recommended for social media sites. For example, employees are encouraged to set their Facebook privacy settings to “Friends Only”.
- Remember NEVER to disclose non-public information of the district (including confidential information), and be aware that taking public positions online that are counter to the district’s interests might cause conflict.
- Be extra cautious when mixing your business and personal lives online. Your electronic personal and business personas are likely to intersect. The district respects the free speech rights of all employees, but you should remember that parents, students, alumni, colleagues and administrators often have access to the online content you post. Keep this in mind when publishing information online that can be seen by more than friends and family, and know that information originally intended just for friends and family may be forwarded to others.

### **Copyright and Fair Use**

- Respect copyright and fair use guidelines. See [U.S. Copyright Office - Fair Use](#) . See also Bettendorf Board Policy 603.9 and 603.9R
- Hyperlinking to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarize and give credit where it is due. When hyperlinking be sure that the content is appropriate.

### **Profiles and Identity**

- Remember your association and responsibility with the Bettendorf Community School District in online social environments. If you identify yourself as a BCSD employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students. Remember how you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.
- Be cautious how you setup your profile, bio, avatar, etc.
- When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself make sure you select a school appropriate image. Employee handout book guidelines apply to the digital world too. Also remember not to utilize protected images. Images should be available under Creative Commons or your own.

### **Social Bookmarking**

- Be aware that others can view the sites that you bookmark.
- Be aware of words used to *tag* or describe the bookmark.
- Be aware of URL shortening services and verify the landing site they point to before submitting a link as a bookmark.
- Attempt to link directly to a page or resource if possible as you do not control what appears on landing pages in the future.

### **Requests for Unblocking Sites**

The Bettendorf Community School District understands that technology is constantly changing and that many sites have significance for teacher and student use.

- If you would like to request that another online site be accessible to use for teaching and learning, please contact the director of technology.
- Requests will be reviewed and the district social media guidelines will be updated periodically throughout the school year.
- A description should be provided of the intended use of the site and what tools on the site match your needed criteria.
- A link to the sites privacy policy should be included if possible.

At this time, school employees are asked to refrain from establishing social media accounts for specific BCSD departments, initiatives, schools or programs without first contacting the director of technology.

*Approved: August 1, 2011*