

## **USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT 11 STAFF**

### **Introduction**

Colorado Springs School District 11 (the District) recognizes the tremendous importance of preparing our students for the 21st century, and understands that part of Next Generation Learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication including social networking sites and applications (apps) that allow sharing. Social networking websites have the potential to support student learning, and staff and students can participate in online social networks where people all over the world share ideas, collaborate, and learn new things. In online social environments that are connected to District information, staff must ensure personal profiles and related content are consistent with work and study at the District. The District seeks to provide both a safe, secure learning environment and the opportunity for students to learn. The District adopts the approach of helping students become responsible users of digital media and personal responsibility is expected. The goal of this guideline is to provide direction when using social media applications both inside and outside the classroom. Staff and students are encouraged to use interactive websites and tools; however, all must be utilized within the context of educational usage.

It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual responsibility and accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by District staff and students for classroom and District use is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to the District's Instructional Technology Resources and Internet Safety Responsible Use Policy (See Policy EHC). By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or other social media for classroom or District use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before posting or commenting on any blog or creating any blog for classroom or District use, wiki and/or podcast.

### **Social Media Guidelines for Faculty & Staff**

#### **Personal Responsibility**

- District employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish, as well as what you choose to share, will be public for a long time through digital footprints. Make sure to protect your privacy.
- Online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.
- When posting online, be sure that the information is representative of your views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of the District.
- Remember that any social media sites including but not limited to blogs, wikis, nings, instant messaging, and podcasts are an extension of the District. What is inappropriate in a classroom or office should be deemed inappropriate online.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of being identified 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.

- When contributing online, do not post confidential student information in any venue.
- Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in a blog, wiki, online social network, or any other form of online publishing or discussion for classroom or District use is his or her own decision. Although free speech laws generally protect those who choose to participate in social media, the courts have ruled that staff may be disciplined if their speech, including online postings, disrupts operations. In fact, the District's social media guidelines encourage employees to participate in online social activities for classroom or District use.
- Staff-created blogs or other online content such as micro blog feeds must also only occur within the context of educational usage. Users must follow proper etiquette, including but not limited to, using proper language with no vulgarity and no cyber-bullying or spreading falsehoods about another that lowers the affected individual in the eyes of the community. Teacher/student interactions online must only occur within the context of educational usage. For the protection of both students and staff, the District strongly advises that staff do not "friend" students on public networks, since lines of personal and professional boundaries are not as clear in social networking sites. Friending students on private or school-based networks for educational purposes is acceptable within the context of educational usage (i.e. Destiny or Sharepoint).

### **Disclaimers**

- District employees are urged to include disclaimers that their views are their own and do not reflect that of their employer. For example, "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Colorado Springs School District 11's positions, strategies, opinions, or policies."
- This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt District employees from personal responsibility for any commentary.
- Classroom blogs do not require a disclaimer, but teachers are recommended to moderate content contributed by students.

### **Profiles and Identity**

- Be cautious of identity theft issues using social networking sites. Be careful not to display personal information for yourself or students when setting up a profile or bio.
- When uploading digital pictures or avatars, make sure you select an appropriate image and adhere to the District's staff dress code. All images should be your own, or otherwise free of any copyright restrictions.

### **Social Networking Sites**

The District schools and programs may have a presence in social networking sites, such as *Facebook*. Follow these guidelines to use social networking sites.

Site administrators:

- At schools, the Principal is responsible for content posting and site management.

- Other administrators may be assigned to assist in posting content and monitoring comments.
- Main page shall indicate it is the “Official page of <Name> School.”
- Schools may post content germane to the activities and news about the school or District, including any appropriate photos or pertinent links or resources.
- Schools shall regularly monitor comments made to posts to ensure they are appropriate as defined in the following disclaimer which shall be posted prominently on the site:

*Any written communication created or received by Colorado Springs School District 11 officials and employees will be made available to the public and media, upon request, unless otherwise exempt. If you do not want your comment and subsequent identifying information released in response to a public-records request, do not comment. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to a work location or employee.*

*The purpose of this site is to disseminate information on specific <SCHOOL NAME> and Colorado Springs School District 11 topics. It is not intended to be a public forum. Comments posted to this Web site will be monitored. The District reserves the right to delete comments that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial or religious groups. Further, the District reserves the right to delete comments that are:*

- (1) spam or include links to other sites;*
- (2) clearly off topic;*
- (3) advocate illegal activity;*
- (4) promote particular services, products, or political organizations;*
- (5) infringe on copyrights or trademarks;*
- (6) use personally identifiable medical information.*

*Commercial advertising content on this site is not controlled or endorsed by Colorado Springs School District 11.*

- *When it is deemed necessary to remove/delete inappropriate content, the principal or site administrator shall make a screen print of the page to preserve the public record of the specific post or comment being removed. The copy should be archived in a folder for safe keeping.*

*Use these settings for access to your school’s Facebook account.*

- *View Settings – Set default view for Wall as “Only Posts by Page.” School may elect to turn “Auto-expanded comments” on or off.*
- *Fan Permissions - School pages should not be enabled for fans to “write or post content to the wall.”*

## **Application Testing Process**

Many free applications are requested by employees on an on-going basis. The District requires that all software applications used on the District network be submitted for testing and approval

to appropriate personnel before downloading. The District's testing process checks with the Divisions of Technology Services (to check for electronic communication device and network compatibility) and Instruction, Curriculum, and Student Services (to check instructional content) (see Policies IJJ and IJL). If a staff member chooses to use a free Web resources or open source product without submitting the application to appropriate personnel, the employee does so at his or her own risk. Internet products can continually change, and data in the clouds is not guaranteed to be secure and is not guaranteed to always be available. If an application is free, your electronic communication device becomes a commodity for data mining (like email addresses and possibly passwords for other programs on your electronic communication device). Technology Services only has the capacity to test and/or block applications on an as needed/requested basis through the testing process. Just because a software application is available for download and is not blocked by a filter, it does not mean that District staff has permission to download without seeking approval. If a staff electronic communication device and/or District Network software, data, user accounts, hardware is damaged, or costs are incurred by users as a result of an untested/unauthorized application, the employee may be personally liable for the damage.

### **Requests for access to Social Media Sites**

The District understands that online learning includes utilizing constantly changing technology and that many sites that are currently "blocked" by the District's internet filter may have pedagogical significance.

- Requests to make sites accessible for use will be reviewed 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 site's privacy policy should be included if possible.

### **Below is a non-inclusive list of sites for your reference that are social networking sites:**

- Audacity: a free, cross-platform audio editing program
- Blogger : an online, free blogging platform owned by Google.
- Class DoJo: a free classroom management tool
- Delicious : a social bookmarking service
- Diigo : a social bookmarking service
- Facebook: a social networking site
- GarageBand : a Macintosh program for recording, making music, teaching to play instruments and producing podcasts
- Google Docs: Create online documents, spreadsheets, and presentations and share them with others, allowing them to view your work online, or even edit the documents collaboratively. Requires a Google account.
- LinkedIn: A social network site that tends to focus on professional relationships, such as people you know in this industry or at that company.
- Moodle: An open source classroom management system. Similar to BlackBoard or WebCT at the university level. You can pay to have someone host your moodle sites, or you can host your own moodle server.
- Office 365: Microsoft productivity tools that are online.

- PBWORKS: An easy-to-use wiki. Get a free wiki, or pay for upgrades, if desired.
- Skype: A downloadable application for your computer to give it telephony functionality. Video calls with other Skype clients is an added feature.
- Twitter : A micro-blogging platform (postings are limited to 140 characters). Free to join and participate.
- VoiceThread: Like a discussion board, but with the ability to comment with audio, video, chat, and drawing tools.
- Wikispaces: Web site like much like Pbworks where one can create and manage their own wiki.