



NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: G - Personnel
POLICY TITLE: Information and Communication Technology / Social Networking
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1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Board of Education of Nebo School District recognizes that websites, Social Media, and other Electronic Communications (collectively “Information and Communication Technology” or “ICT”), when used appropriately by District Employees, enable the schools, Students, and parents to communicate and share information in a timely and relevant manner across numerous platforms. As ICT mediums continue to evolve, the District recognizes the importance of utilizing new ways to communicate with parents, Students, and the community while remaining mindful of its obligation to ensure Student privacy, Internet safety, and professional boundaries. This policy is intended to educate Employees on the appropriate use of ICT and by so doing protect Employees, Students, and the District against potential legal and other consequences. The sections that follow are not meant to be exhaustive lists of everything that is or is not allowed within the many uses of ICT; rather, they are provided to define and clarify the overriding principle that Employees of Nebo School District must adhere to the highest standards of professionalism in all their Electronic Communications and other uses of Information and Communication Technology. Because ICT continues to evolve, the guidelines outlined herein will apply to new technologies as they emerge.

2. POLICY APPLICATION

Where this policy limits or restricts certain forms of communication between Employees and Students, the limitations and restrictions do not apply to communications between Employees and Students: (a) if such communications are for educational, health, safety, emergency, or other legitimate reasons; (b) who are relatives (defined as parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews) or legal guardians; or (c) who have a relationship outside the school setting in conjunction with religious/church groups, community organizations, or other activities unrelated to the District, and they occur in the context of that relationship.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 “Educator”** means a teacher, counselor, administrator, librarian, or other person required to hold a license as per Utah Code Ann., Section 53A-6-103.

- 3.2 **“Electronic Communication”** means any communication, whether written, audio, visual, or otherwise, transmitted via any electronic device. Electronic Communications include, but are not limited to, phone calls, text messages, email messages, instant messaging, chats, blogs, or the uploading, downloading, posting, or creating of any material via mobile device, the Internet, or any local network.
- 3.3 **“Employee”** means any adult, who is not also a K-12 Student, employed by Nebo School District.
- 3.4 **“Information and Communication Technology”** or **“ICT”** means any hardware, software, storage, or audio-visual systems that enable users to create, access, store, transmit, receive, and manipulate information.
- 3.5 **“Social Media”** means any web-based or mobile technologies that enable Electronic Communication as an interactive dialogue or allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.
- 3.6 **“Social Networking”** means establishing, maintaining, posting to, or otherwise participating in an electronic community on websites, blogs, or through accounts on Social Media sites.
- 3.7 **“Student”** means a child under eighteen (18) years of age or any K-12 student enrolled in school, in or out of Nebo School District.

4. WEBSITES

- 4.1 Any website representing the District as a whole will be created and maintained under the direction of the District’s Technical Services Department. No other entity shall purport to officially represent the District in this capacity.
- 4.2 Any official website representing an individual school will be created and maintained under the direction of the school administrator.
- 4.3 Educator-Created Websites:
 - 4.3.1 An Educator who creates or maintains a school-related website shall notify the school administrator.
 - 4.3.2 Any school-related website shall comply with all school and District policies. Any material or content containing profanity; obscenity; vulgarity; defamation; bullying; harassing; false or inaccurate information; threatening or abusive content; pornography or other indecent material; or any other types of inappropriate material or content is prohibited. In addition, material or content which invades another person’s privacy or promotes activities which are illegal or unsuitable for minors is prohibited.
 - 4.3.3 Educators must comply with any and all applicable state and federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and may not post Student photos or other personally identifiable information unless specifically authorized under the provisions of FERPA or obtaining prior written consent from the parent or legal guardian. Any questions or concerns about this matter should be referred to the school’s administrator.
 - 4.3.4 Educators are expected to monitor the content on their school-related site(s), including posts by Students. Educators shall ensure that Student posts which violate laws or District policies are removed immediately and that appropriate disciplinary action is taken.

4.4 Personal Websites:

- 4.4.1 Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the creation of private websites by Employees acting outside the scope of their employment and with personally owned equipment.
- 4.4.2 Personal websites may not use official school logos or purport to represent the District or any of its schools or programs.
- 4.4.3 Employees shall not communicate privately with, nor allow private communications from, Students via any personal website.
- 4.4.4 Employees maintaining personal websites shall ensure that photos, videos, text, and all other content on the website will not likely disrupt or cause distraction of school activities. Personal websites must allow the Employee to maintain a professional, respectful association with Students, colleagues, and the community, and must not undermine the reputation of the District, the school, or its administrators or Employees.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA

5.1 Social Media may be used within the District as a tool for effective communication. When used, Social Media should accomplish the following:

- 5.1.1 Promote the District in a positive manner;
- 5.1.2 Share District news and information in a timely and relevant fashion;
- 5.1.3 Encourage communication between the District and the public; and
- 5.1.4 Not violate District policies.

5.2 Educator-Created Social Media Pages:

- 5.2.1 An Educator who creates or maintains a school-related Social Networking page or community shall notify the school administrator.
- 5.2.2 Any school-related Social Media page shall comply with all school and District policies. Any material or content containing profanity; obscenity; vulgarity; defamation; bullying; harassing; false or inaccurate information; threatening or abusive content; pornography or other indecent material; or any other types of inappropriate material or content is prohibited. In addition, material or content which invades another person's privacy or promotes activities which are illegal or unsuitable for minors is prohibited.
- 5.2.3 Educators must comply with any and all applicable state and federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and may not post Student photos or other personally identifiable information unless specifically authorized under the provisions of FERPA or obtaining prior written consent from the parent or legal guardian. Any questions or concerns about this matter should be referred to the school's administrator.
- 5.2.4 Educators are responsible to monitor the content on the school-related page, including posts by Students. Educators shall ensure that Student posts which violate laws or District policies are removed immediately and that appropriate disciplinary action is taken.
- 5.2.5 Educators and Students interacting through a school-related Social Media site shall maintain the same professional level of communication, behavior, and appearance as

though they were in the classroom. Educators must not engage in dialogue or behavior with Students that is “peer-like,” but must maintain a formal teacher-student relationship.

5.3 Personal Social Networking:

- 5.3.1** Nothing in this policy shall prohibit personal or private Social Networking by Employees acting outside of the scope of their employment with personally owned equipment and not on contract time.
- 5.3.2** Personal Social Media pages may not use official school logos or purport to represent the District or any of its schools or programs.
- 5.3.3** Employees shall not communicate privately with, nor allow private communications from, Students via any personal Social Networking medium.
- 5.3.4** Employees who create or maintain personal Social Networking pages shall ensure that photos, videos, text, and all other content on their page will not likely disrupt school activities. Pages and profiles must allow the Employee to maintain a professional, respectful association with Students, colleagues, and the community, and must not undermine the reputation of the school or its administrators.
- 5.3.5** To maintain a more formal staff-student relationship, an Employee shall not “friend” Students from the Employee’s personal Social Networking profile, except as provided in Section 2 of this policy. In addition, Employees should not instant message Students nor respond to student-initiated attempts at conversation through the Educator’s personal profile.
- 5.3.6** Use of District-owned equipment and Internet access may be monitored, and Employees have no expectation of privacy in activities utilizing District-owned equipment whether the use is on or off contract time.

6. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

- 6.1** Subject to the parameters outlined in Section 2 above, all Electronic Communications between Employees and Students must be school-related and should, where possible, be done through the Employee’s official school medium. The following guidelines are recommended for Electronic Communications between Students and Employees and are intended to protect against potential legal and other consequences.
 - 6.1.1** Text Messaging: Where possible, text messages from Employees to Students should be sent from a District-issued phone or account. Text messaging from personal phones should only be used when no other official form of communication will suffice.
 - 6.1.2** Chatting: All Employee-Student chats or instant messages, including video chatting, should be done through an official school email account, Social Media page, website, or other official medium.
 - 6.1.3** Personal Email: All email from Employees to Students should be sent from an Employee’s official District email address. Employees should not share their personal email addresses with Students.
 - 6.1.4** Personal Phone Calls: Employees should avoid making phone calls to a Student’s cell phone.
- 6.2** Employees shall not initiate or continue to discuss any of the following issues with Students via Electronic Communication without: (a) obtaining appropriate parental consent; or (b) having an appropriate and legitimate educational, health, safety, emergency, or other reason:

- 6.2.1 Political affiliations;
- 6.2.2 Political philosophies or beliefs of the Student or Student's family, except as provided under Utah Code Ann., §53A-13-101.1 or other applicable federal or state laws, rules, or regulations;
- 6.2.3 Mental or psychological problems of the Student or Student's family;
- 6.2.4 Sex behavior or attitudes;
- 6.2.5 Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- 6.2.6 Criminal appraisals of others with whom the Student has a close family relationship;
- 6.2.7 Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with attorneys, doctors, or ministers;
- 6.2.8 Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the Student or parents; or
- 6.2.9 Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Such discussions between Employees and Students via Electronic Communication on any the above issues without appropriate parental consent or having a legitimate reason constitutes an inappropriate boundary invasion in violation of this policy, and may also be in violation of the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment and the Utah Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

7. VIOLATION

Any Employee found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, suspension, termination, verbal or written warnings/reprimands, or alternate employment placement. In imposing such discipline, all facts and circumstances of the incident(s) shall be taken into account.

EXHIBITS

None

REFERENCES

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 USC §1232(h); 34 CFR Part 98
Utah Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, §53A-13-301, et seq.
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Requirements, Utah Code Ann., §62A-4a-401, et seq.
Utah Orderly School Termination Procedures Act, Utah Code Ann., §53A-8-101, et seq.
Utah Educator Standards, Utah Admin. Code, R277-515, et seq.
Professional Practices and Conduct for Utah Educators, Utah Admin. Code, R686-103, et seq.
Nebo School District Certified Employees Agreement
Nebo School District Classified Employees Memorandum of Understanding
Nebo School District Management Team Memorandum of Understanding
Nebo School District Policy #GBEF, Employee/Student Standards of Conduct
Nebo School District Policy #GCPD, Orderly Termination of Employees
Nebo School District Policy #JHFA, Child Abuse or Neglect

FORMS

None
