Social Networking for Staff

The Wareham Public Schools recognize the proliferation of social media usage between staff members and students. However, due to the nature of social network sites, there exists a risk without care and planning, that the lines between one's professional life and personal life will be blurred. Our staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Staff members are reminded that any information deemed "private" becomes "public".

Staff Use of Personal Technology

a. Limit On-Duty-Use
Staff members are highly encouraged to limit their personal technology use during duty hours. Use of Personal Technology for non-district business should be limited to off-duty time and designated breaks.

b. Work/Personal Distinction
Staff members are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between their personal social media use and any district-related social media sites.

c. Student Photographs
Absent parent consent staff members may not send, share, or post pictures, text messages, emails or other material that personally identifies district students in electronic or any other form of personal technology. Staff members may not use images of students, emails, or other personally-identifiable student information for personal gain or profit.

d. Professional Effectiveness
District employees must be mindful that any Internet information is ultimately accessible to the world. To avoid jeopardizing their professional effectiveness, employees are highly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the privacy policies, settings, and protections on any social networking websites to which they choose to subscribe and be aware that information posted online, despite privacy protections is easily and often reported to administrators or exposed to district students.

e. Personal Social Networking and Media Accounts
Before employees create or join an online social network, they should ask themselves whether they would be comfortable if a 'friend' decided to send the information to their students, the students' parents or their administrator. Educators must give serious thought to the implications of joining an online social network.

f. Responsible Online Identity Monitoring
Employees are encouraged to monitor their 'online identity', by performing search engine research on a routine basis in order to prevent their online profiles from being fraudulently compromised or simply to track information posted about them online.

g. Employees in an official capacity as an employee must exercise caution with any online interactions with students on social networking sites outside those forums dedicated to academic use. District employees' social networking profiles and personal blogs should not be linked to district students' online profiles. Additionally, district employees should use appropriate discretion when using social networks for personal communications and should limit this activity to off-duty hours and the use of their own electronic communication devices.

h. Contacting Students Off-Hours
When in doubt about contacting a district student during off-duty hours using district-owned communication devices, network services, and Internet access route or those of the employee, begin by contacting the student's parent(s) or legal guardian. District employees should only contact district students for educational purposes and must never disclose confidential information possessed by the employee by virtue of his or her district employment.

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WAREHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WAREHAM, MASSACHUSETTS