

SECTION 618 – EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (12/2017)

Employee Use of Social Media

As professionals, all Eastern Pulaski employees are expected to support a positive public image of Eastern Pulaski Schools. Any and all references to Eastern Pulaski Schools made on social media should be positive and support our mission and vision statements.

For the purpose of this policy, **social media** is defined as: primarily internet or cellular phone based applications and tools to share information among people.

Considerations for staff:

- Any reference to Eastern Pulaski Schools should be made only in a professional manner.
- Exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.
- Public airing of grievances or communications of matters that are outside the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities are not professional and may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, a verbal or written warning, suspension, and/or termination.
- Employees must avoid making defamatory or derogatory statements about the school district or any of its employees. Such unprofessional comments may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, a verbal or written warning, suspension, and/or termination.
- Employees shall not foster hate and/or unprofessional behavior by "Liking", "Sharing", "Favoriting", "ReTweeting", etc. of any comment/post that would place allegiance to one side or another in a school-related disagreement and/or disparages the school corporation in any manner. Violations may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, a verbal or written warning, suspension, and/or termination.
- Gain prior written approval before citing or referencing fellow staff members, administrators, parents, volunteers, suppliers, or others associated with the District
- Maintain a strict segregation of personal and school-related accounts.
- Review the privacy settings on social medial accounts to limit the access of information to pertinent people.

Employee Use of Social Media When Communicating With Students

An employee may communicate through social media with students who are currently enrolled in the corporation, however the communications must comply with the provisions outlined below. An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization. Any contact with currently enrolled students should be done in a professional and transparent manner.

When communicating with students through social media, employees shall observe the following:

- The employee shall limit communications with students to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to classwork, homework, and tests); for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity.
- The preferred method of communicating with students is with a group texting app which conceals the sender's number.
 - However, in certain circumstances approved by administration in writing, employees may utilize other forms of communication **if** written permission has been given by the parent/guardian **and** on file with the building administration.
- Improper fraternization with students in any form is strictly prohibited.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- Employees are prohibited from soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student.
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of social media the employee uses to communicate with any currently enrolled student(s).
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating one-to-one with the student through electronic media.

