

SOCIAL NETWORKING

The following guidelines are meant to provide Colby School District instructors with standards by which to conduct proper electronic communication involving staff and students. Various forms of electronic communication, such as social networking and text messages, can provide a unique means of communication and education of 21st century skills, but it must not be allowed to create unintended and improper communication between teacher and students.

It is the Colby School District's intention to actively communicate with our community through social media/networking to build relationships with families.

There are three major types of communication governed by this document: text or instant messaging, private social networking, and school sponsored social networking.

Text or Instant Messaging- Defined as any technology by which direct, one to one, text or picture messaging can be achieved over a phone network, private network (Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, etc.), or the internet. This form may or may not be bundled with other forms of social networking, but if bundled, both functions are to be handled as one even if the teacher does not intend to use the messaging function.

Private Social Networking- Defined as any technology by which large numbers of individuals create personal profiles and contact lists of other individuals, companies, and organizations based on personal interests, family relationships, random contact, or commercial gain (ex. MySpace, Facebook, Google services, Yahoo services, YouTube, etc.). Such accounts belong to the individual teacher or student and exist outside a school context.

School Sponsored Social Networking- Defined as social networking used in the context of the school district's educational mission. Such networking is expressly disclosed to the building principal and the technology coordinator, clearly defined in its scope of activities to be conducted, and with all account detail on file with the building for audit. The intent is that the network will be open only to staff involved in the educational function, but may include outside persons (parents, volunteers, outside experts) if their participation is a benefit to the project.

Staff wishing to establish a School Sponsored Social Network Site must complete the Social Networking Proposal Request Form and submit it to their building principal and technology coordinator. The site must hold a direct educational value to the sponsoring Colby School District grade level, department or activity. The teacher/coach/advisor will become the site coordinator and must be able to provide account details to the building principal or technology coordinator upon request. The site coordinator will be solely responsible for adding participants to the social network site and will be responsible for educating the student participants on appropriate use of the site. The site coordinator must obtain signed notification from the parent, confirming the parents' acknowledgement of the communication.

Online forums, including social networking websites (such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter LinkedIn, etc.), personal websites, online discussion/chat rooms, and web logs, have become popular tools for communication among students, staff and parents. While the use of these online forums has many advantages, such use can also create potential liability for the District. As a result, the District has

developed certain rules regarding employee use of online forums; as such use pertains to the school community, in order to protect the interests of the students, the parents, the District, and its personnel.

- Communication between teachers and students must only take place with full disclosure to protect the student, the teacher and the district. Full disclosure is defined as all details and intentions of the social networking site made available.
 - Exceptions of the full disclosure to school officials include the following:
 - Family relationships – there is a direct family relationship (ex. Teacher is the parent, step parent, aunt/uncle, grandparent).
 - Outside organization – the teacher has involvement thru some non-school or volunteer organization (ex. Church youth group, youth sports association, outside employment, etc.)

In these cases, the Colby School District staff member does not need to inform the building principal or the technology coordinator of the electronic communication, but does encourage staff to take into account public perception and their role as a public employee.

- The use of online social networking sites such as chat rooms; wikis, blogs, forums and other Web 2.0 tools will be allowed only in controlled, staff-supervised settings, and for valid school-related purposes.
- Users must comply with the district's Internet Safety and Acceptable Use policy and rules as well as any other relevant policies and rules during such use.
- Teachers may find educational ways to integrate the use of Web tools such as online collaboration tools, blogs, wikis, podcasts, videocasts and social networking sites like Facebook.
- If any staff member fails to use social media/networking appropriately their right to utilize the tools will be removed and the administration of the media site will be delegated to another staff member or the site will be eliminated.

CROSS REF.: Policy #823-Public Records Policy
 Policy #771.1-Copyright Compliance
 Policy #363.1 Rule-Acceptable Use Policy - Students