

28.0 ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

28.1 As defined herein, “social media” includes but is not limited to Facebook, Google+, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, and other online forums.

28.2 The Weld County School District RE-3J (“District”) recognizes the value of social media and respects the interests of its employees in participating in the online community. However, when engaging in such activities, District personnel must be mindful of and comply with all laws and District policies, including those set forth below. Non-compliance by any personnel will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

28.3 The speed with which the blogosphere moves makes it impossible to address or anticipate every issue or situation that may arise. However, the following principles are applicable at all time:

28.3.1 Employees are personally responsible for the content of their own social media pages and sites that are accessible to the public, or to which they authorize access to school personnel or students. Employees must be mindful that what appears on their pages or site will potentially be public for a long time. Employees should protect their privacy.

28.3.2 Employee’s online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that they use face-to- face.

28.3.3 Blogs, wikis and podcasts are an extension of classrooms. What is inappropriate in a classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.

28.3.4 When contributing online, employees will not post confidential student information.

28.3.5 As in other media, employees are not prohibited from taking positions on controversial issues or from participating in heated political or social debate. However, when doing so, if expressions of personal opinion might be mistaken for opinions of or endorsement by the District, participating employees should make clear that the opinions expressed are their personal opinions and not those of the District, its Board members, administrators, or employees.

28.3.6 When engaging in the use of social media personally (as opposed to on behalf of, or at the direction of, the District), employees should refrain from the use of the District’s logo, branding, or other District-related indicia.

28.3.7 Engaging in illegal or patently offensive activities, such as the posting of lewd and/or sexually explicit photographs, and the use of Hate Speech, is prohibited.

28.3.8 Employees must remain respectful of the District, its Board members, administrators, or employees, and no employee may allow any content to appear on any social media site controlled by the employee that is disrespectful of or insubordinate to such employee's supervisor. Publication or hosting of content concerning internal District matters that are not matters of public concern may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

28.3.9 The lines between public and private, personal and professional, are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying one's self as a District employee online, an employee is now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Employees should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the District. Employees should always remember that just as their conduct in and outside the workplace reflects on the District, their deportment online in communicating via social media, as well as content that they allow to be placed and remain on pages or sites they control, will reflect on the District.

28.4 In summary, the District's social media policy is an extension of existing policies addressing other forms of communication. The same judgment, decorum, and adherence to professional ethics are to be used in all online activities. Should employees have any questions about this policy, they should consult with their Supervisor or the Superintendent.

Approved: September 26, 2012