



## **SECTION V: EMPLOYEES**

## **POLICY 5100**

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY - STAFF**

Broken Arrow Public Schools (the “District”) recognizes the appropriate use of social media as a method for communicating ideas and information. The forms of electronic and digital communications change rapidly. This policy addresses common existing forms of electronic and digital communication (email, texting, blogging, tweeting, posting, etc.) but is intended to cover any new form of electronic or digital communication which utilizes a computer, phone or other digital or electronic device.

#### **Definitions**

“Social networking” or “social media” means interaction with external websites or services based upon participant contributions to the content. Types of social media include social and professional networks, blogs, micro blogs, video or photo sharing and social book marking; and

“Comment” means a response to an article or social media content submitted by a commenter.

#### **Official Use of Social Media**

The district is responsible for creating and maintaining its “official” online presence. Unless specifically authorized by the Superintendent, no district employee may create an “official” District presence on any form of Social Media, now in existence, or created in the future, or represent themselves as a spokesperson or authorized representative of the District.

#### **Professional Conduct**

The District is committed to creating an environment in which all persons can interact together in an atmosphere free of all forms of harassment, exploitation or intimidation. Therefore, when communicating via social networks, employees are expected to act with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights, privileges, privacy, and property of others. By doing so employees will be abiding by applicable laws, school district policy and the core values of the District. The District prohibits abusive or offensive on-line behavior of employees at work or when engaged in work-related activities; likewise, District resources are not to be used in abusive or offensive ways. Also, the District discourages out-of-school on-line abusive or offensive behavior because of its potential to interfere with and disrupt working and student relationships.

Employees are responsible for the material they publish online as well as the messages sent via computers and wireless telecommunication devices. Any conduct that negatively reflects upon the district, consists of inappropriate behavior, or creates disruption on the part of an employee may expose that employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Inappropriate behavior is defined as any activity that harms students, compromises an employee’s objectivity, undermines an employee’s authority or ability to maintain control of students or work with or around students, is disruptive to the educational environment, or is illegal. Moreover, employees should not engage in personal social media during working hours.



## **SECTION V: EMPLOYEES**

## **POLICY 5100**

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY - STAFF**

#### **Expectations of Staff**

District employees are role models and must exemplify ethical behavior in their relationships with students, clients, and other staff members. Online activity, including personal online activity, is public and is therefore a reflection on the district as an organization. Employees should exercise good judgment and common sense, maintain professionalism, and address inappropriate behavior or activity discovered on these networks. Inappropriate behavior or activity should be immediately communicated to a direct supervisor. The following should inform and guide employee judgment and actions:

1. The line between professional and personal relationships can become blurred; therefore, district employees should exercise discretion and maintain professionalism when communicating with students via computers or wireless telecommunication devices. Employees should limit this type of communication with students to matters concerning a student's education or extra-curricular activities for which the staff member has assigned responsibility. Excessive messaging or other social media communication to an individual student should be avoided.
2. District employees are prohibited from engaging in private exchanges with students, and should only communicate with groups or in such a manner that the communication can be publicly viewed.
3. Photos of and videos featuring students should not be posted on social media without the informed consent of a parent/guardian. For personal protection, never take a photo of an individual student.
4. Group student photos may be submitted to the principal or superintendent for inclusion on official district accounts.
5. Students should not be cited, obviously referenced, or depicted in images without proper written approval of the student's parent/guardian, and the confidential details of these individuals should never be disclosed.
6. Externally communicating any confidential information or information related to the District not intended for public dissemination is always forbidden and may be grounds for termination and legal action. Public information will be released through the superintendent or designee.
7. Copyright and fair use laws must be respected at all times. Trademarks such as logos, slogans, and digital content such as art, music, or photographs, may require permission from the copyright owner. It is the responsibility of the employee to seek permission for any such trademarked content.
8. District employees are discouraged from sharing content or comments containing the following when it is directed at a colleague, parent, student or citizen of the State of Oklahoma:
  - a. Obscene sexual content or links to obscene sexual content;



## **SECTION V: EMPLOYEES**

## **POLICY 5100**

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY - STAFF**

- b. Abusive and bullying language or tone;
- c. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity; and
- d. Disclosure of information which an agency and its employees are required to keep confidential by law, regulation or internal policy.

Content or comments of the type listed above are especially concerning when directed at or exchanged with a student and, as a result, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and, in some instances, referral to law enforcement or licensing bodies.

#### **Accountability**

All staff are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for the district and appropriate role models for students. Failure to do so could put an employee in violation of district policy. Violation of district policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. All employees who have reason to believe that their on-line conduct has generated public or media attention are expected to immediately report their activity and attention generated to their supervisor.

#### **Distribution of Policy**

This policy shall be distributed to all employees via the District's e-mail system at the beginning of each school year and at the time of hiring to all new employees hired after the start of the school year.

Reference: 74 O.S. §840-8.1

Source: *Broken Arrow Board of Education policy adoption, March 12, 2012.*  
*Broken Arrow Board of Education policy revised, November 12, 2018.*  
*Broken Arrow Board of Education policy revised, November 4, 2019.*