

## **Bainville K-12 Schools**

### **PERSONNEL**

5460

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#### Electronic Resources and Social Networking

The Bainville School District recognizes that an effective public education system develops students who are globally aware, civically engaged, and capable of managing their lives and careers. The District also believes that students need to be proficient users of information, media, and technology to succeed in a digital world.

Public school employees are held to a high standard of behavior. The Montana Department of Education *Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics* requires District staff to maintain a professional relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom. The District encourages all staff to read and become familiar with the Code of Ethics.

Therefore, the Bainville School District will use electronic resources as a powerful and compelling means for students to learn core subjects and applied skills in relevant and rigorous ways. It is the District's goal to provide students with rich and ample opportunities to use technology for important purposes in schools just as individuals in workplaces and other real-life settings. The District's technology will enable educators and students to communicate, learn, share, collaborate and create, to think and solve problems, to manage their work and to take ownership of their lives.

The School Board discourages district staff from socializing with students on social networking websites (during school or out-of-school). Staff are reminded that the same relationship, exchange, interaction, information, or behavior that would be unacceptable in a non-technological medium, is unacceptable when done through the use of technology. In fact, due to the vastly increased potential audience digital dissemination presents, extra caution must be exercised by staff to ensure they don't cross the line of acceptability.

Specifically, the following forms of technology based interactivity or connectivity are expressly permitted or forbidden:<sup>1</sup>

What in other mediums of expression could remain private opinions, when expressed by staff on a social networking website, have the potential to be disseminated far beyond the speaker's desire or intention, and could undermine the public perception of fitness of the individual to educate students, and thus undermine teaching effectiveness. In this way, the effect of the expression and publication of such opinions could potentially lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member, up to and including termination or nonrenewal of the contract of employment.

Accessing social networking websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited, unless asked to do so by administration. Except in an emergency situation, staff shall not access social networking sites using district equipment or personal equipment, including during breaks or

preparation periods. All school district employees who participate in social networking websites, shall not post any school district data, documents, photographs, logos, or other district owned or created information on any website. Further, the posting of any private or confidential school district material on such websites is strictly prohibited.

The Board directs the Superintendent or his/her designee to create strong electronic educational systems that support innovative teaching and learning, to provide appropriate staff development opportunities and to develop procedures to support this policy.

Note: <sup>1</sup> What is and is not acceptable staff/student interaction on social networking sites is an education community decision, and will vary from district to district. As a general rule, the greater the degree of real-life connections and interactivity between staff and students that occur in the community, the greater the tolerance will be for virtual connections and interactivity. Use the following list to help guide discussions with staff to determine which should be included in the policy and with what modifications/stipulations. It is as important to include in the policy what **is** permitted as what **is not** permitted. The discussions may elicit additional bullets to include in the policy.

- Sharing personal landline or cell phone numbers with students;
- Text messaging students;
- Emailing students other than through and to school controlled and monitored accounts;
- Soliciting students as friends or contacts on social networking sites;
- Accepting the solicitation of students as friends or contacts on social networking sites;
- Creation of administratively approved and sanctioned “groups” on social networking sites that permit the broadcast of information without granting students access to staff member’s personal information;
- Sharing with students access information to personal websites or other media through which the staff member would share personal information and occurrences.

Cross Reference:           5015           Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation  
                                  5223           Personal Conduct  
                                  5255           Disciplinary Action  
                                  *Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics*

Policy History:

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