Personnel - Certified/Non-certified
Social Media

CREC recognizes the importance of social media for its employees, and acknowledges that its employees have the right under the First Amendment, in certain circumstances, to speak out on matters of public concern. In accordance with the provisions of the First Amendment, CREC will regulate the use of social media by employees, including employees’ personal use of social media, when such use:

1) interferes, disrupts or undermines the effective operation of CREC and/or its individual schools or programs;
2) is used to engage in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory or threatening or similarly inappropriate communications;
3) creates a hostile work environment;
4) breaches confidentiality obligations of CREC employees; or
5) violates the law, CREC policies and/or other CREC rules and regulations.

CREC, through its Executive Director or designee, will adopt and maintain administrative regulations to implement this policy.

Legal References:

U.S. Constitution, Amend. I
Conn. Constitution, Article I, Sections 3, 4, 14
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-48d
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-51q
Electronic Communication Privacy Act, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2510 through 2520

Policy adopted: February 19, 2014
CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL
Hartford, Connecticut
Personnel – Certified/Non-certified

Social Media

Definitions:

Social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and MySpace.

CREC includes all names, logos, buildings, images and entities under the authority of the Capitol Region Education Council.

Rules Concerning Personal Social Media Activity

1. An employee may not mention, discuss or reference CREC or its individual schools, programs or teams on personal social networking sites in a manner that a reasonable person would construe to be an official CREC communication, unless the employee also states within the communication that such communication is the personal view of the CREC employee and that the views expressed are the employee’s alone and do not represent the views of CREC or its Board of Directors.

2. Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students, parents, and colleagues. It is not appropriate for an employee to “friend” a student or his/her parent or guardian or otherwise establish special relationships with selected students through personal social media, and it is not appropriate for an employee to give students or parents access to personal postings unrelated to school.

3. Unless given written consent, employees may not use CREC’s logo or trademarks on their personal posts. Please note that this prohibition extends to the use of logos or trademarks associated with individual schools, programs or teams of CREC. This prohibition does not extend to incidental displays of CREC’s logo or trademarks, such as in family photographs of student athletes in uniform.

4. Employees must refrain from engaging in harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory, threatening or similarly inappropriate communications through personal social media. Such communications reflect poorly on CREC’s reputation, can affect the educational process and may substantially and materially interfere with an employee’s ability to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities.

5. Employees are individually responsible for their personal communications through
social media. Employees may be sued by other employees, parents or others, and any individual that views an employee’s communications through social media as defamatory pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. As such activities are outside the scope of employment, employees may be personally liable for such claims.

6. Employees are required to comply with all CREC policies and procedures with respect to the use of computer equipment, networks or electronic devices when accessing social media sites. Any access to personal social media activities while on school property or using CREC equipment must comply with those policies, and may not interfere with an employee’s duties at work.

7. CREC reserves the right to monitor all employee use of CREC computers, Wi-Fi and other CREC electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any personal communication made through social media while using CREC computers, Wi-Fi, cellular telephones or any other CREC electronic devices.

8. All communications through personal social media must comply with CREC’s policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information.

9. An employee may not link a personal social media page to CREC’s website or the websites of individual schools, programs or teams; or post CREC’s material on a social media site or webpage.

10. All CREC policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to public trust, illegal harassment, code of conduct, and protecting confidential information.

Rules Concerning CREC-Sponsored Social Media Activity

1. In order for an employee to use social media sites as an educational tool or in relation to extracurricular activities or programs of CREC, the employee must seek and obtain the permission of his/her principal or director.

2. If an employee wishes to use Facebook or other similar social media site to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements etc., for a school-based club or a school-based activity or an official school-based organization, or an official sports team, or to communicate with parents about class activities, the employee must also comply with the following rules:
• Facebook and other similar social media sites are not considered appropriate to use between employees and students for instructional purposes such as posting assignments, collecting homework, discussing class activities.

• When Facebook is used as the social media site for a club, school organization, or school activity, members will not be established as “friends,” but as members of the group list. The employee must set up the club, etc. as a group list, which will be “closed” (e.g. membership in the group is limited to students, parents and appropriate school personnel, and “monitored” (e.g. the employee has the ability to access and supervise communications on the social media site).

• When Twitter is used to communicate with parents, it will be a private Twitter account for which the administrator of the account must approve members.

• Employees may not include photographs of students in their Twitter or other similar social media site account, nor shall they report on the current location of students (e.g., the current location of a field trip). Such communication about said event shall occur after the event has concluded.

• Anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the social media site may only gain access by the permission of the employee (e.g. teacher, administrator, supervisor or coach). Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the employee invites them and allows them to join.

• Parents shall be permitted to access any page that their child has been invited to join.

• Access to the page may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization, team, or classroom.

• The employee responsible for the page will monitor the content to ensure compliance with CREC policies and appropriateness of content.

• The employee’s supervisor shall be permitted access to any page established by the employee for a school-related purpose.

• Employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such CREC-sponsored social media activity.

3. Employees are required to refrain from making harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory, threatening, or similarly inappropriate statements in their social media communications on CREC-sponsored sites.

4. Employees are required to comply with all CREC policies and procedures and all applicable laws with respect to the use of computer equipment, networks or devices when accessing CREC-sponsored social media sites.

5. CREC reserves the right to monitor all employee use of CREC computers and other electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any communication
made through social media while using CREC computers, cellular telephones or any other CREC electronic devices.

6. All communications through CREC-sponsored social media must comply with CREC’s policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information.

7. An employee may not link a CREC-sponsored social media page to any personal social media sites or sites not sponsored by CREC.

8. An employee may not use CREC-sponsored social media communications for private financial gain, political, commercial, advertisement, proselytizing or solicitation purposes.

9. An employee may not use CREC-sponsored social media communications in a manner that misrepresents personal views as those of CREC or of individual schools or programs, or in a manner that could be construed as such.

**Disciplinary Consequences**

Violation of CREC’s policy and/or regulation concerning the use of social media may lead to discipline up to and including the termination of employment consistent with state and federal law.

Cf Policy No. 6141.322 Computers Websites/Pages
Policy No. 4118.5/4218.5 Acceptable Computer Network Use

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