

1 **Great Falls Public School District**

2
3 **PERSONNEL**

5460

4
5 Electronic Resources and Social Networking

6 The Great Falls Public School District uses electronic resources as powerful and compelling
7 educational tools. While social networking websites, texting, and the like can offer learning
8 opportunities, problems and dangers may result from the use of this technology. The widespread
9 popularity of these technologies has created potential liabilities for educators.

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11 By maintaining professional standards of behavior, potential liabilities may be mitigated. The
12 Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics requires District staff to maintain a professional
13 relationship with each student, both in and outside the classroom. The District encourages all staff
14 to read and become familiar with the Code of Ethics.

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16 The school district staff shall not socialize with students on social networking websites (during
17 school or out-of-school) in a manner contrary to this policy. District staff is advised and expected
18 to maintain professional relationships. Staff is further reminded that the same types of
19 relationships, exchanges, interactions, or behavior that would be unacceptable in a non-
20 technological medium are unacceptable in a technological medium, in or out of school. Due to the
21 vastly increased potential audience and the potential blurring of the professional relationship in
22 digital communication, extra caution must be exercised by staff to ensure the lines of acceptability
23 are not crossed.

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25 Specifically, the following forms of technology-based interactivity or connectivity are expressly
26 permitted when used in a manner related to the delivery of educational services or district
27 operations:

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- 29 • Sharing personal phone numbers with students for educational purposes;
 - 30 • Messaging and e-mailing students for educational purposes;
 - 31 • Soliciting students or accepting the solicitations of students as “friends” or contacts on
32 social networking sites for educational purposes;
 - 33 • Creation of administratively approved and sanctioned “groups” on social networking sites
34 that permit the broadcast of information without granting students access to staff
35 members’ personal information.
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37 Specifically, the following forms of technology-based interactivity or connectivity are expressly
38 forbidden when used in a manner not related to the delivery of educational services or district
39 operations:

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- 41 • Sharing personal phone numbers with students for non-educational purposes;
 - 42 • Messaging and e-mailing students for non-educational purposes;
 - 43 • Soliciting students or accepting the solicitations of students as “friends” or contacts on
44 social networking sites for non-educational purposes.
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1 Accessing social networking websites for individual use for informal or personal purposes is
2 permissible within reasonable limits.

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4 Staff who participate in social networking websites, shall not post any school district data,
5 documents, photographs, logos, or other district owned or created information on any website for
6 non-educational purposes. Adherence to the Release of Student Information language in the
7 GFPS Confirmation of Receipt of Handbook Information is required. Further, the posting of any
8 private or confidential school district material is strictly prohibited.

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10 The Board directs the Superintendent or his/her designee to provide appropriate staff
11 development opportunities and to maintain procedures to support this policy.

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13 Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination, discharge
14 or nonrenewal of the contract of employment.

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17 Cross Reference:

- 18 5015 Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation
- 19 5223 Personal Conduct
- 20 5255 Disciplinary Action
- 21 5450 Employee Electronic Mail and Online Services Usage
- 22 5450F [Staff Computer Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Agreement](#)
- 23 FERPA [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Professional Educators of Montana](#)
- 24 [Code of Ethics](#)

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26 Policy History:

- 27 Adopted on: December 12, 2011
- 28 Revised on: September 24, 2018
- 29 Revised on: