

# **City of Lowell Public Schools**

## **SY18/19 New Employee Policy Document and Code of Conduct**

### ***ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER USAGE (HARDWARE & SOFTWARE) POLICY***

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The Lowell Public Schools consider the following uses of the Internet and World Wide Web [WWW] unacceptable and just cause for taking disciplinary action, revoking networking privileges and/or initiating legal action:

#### **Illegal Activities**

- a. Users shall not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the wide area network [WAN] or to any other local area network [LAN] or computer system through the WAN, or go beyond their authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of browsing.
- b. Users shall not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system performance or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal.
- c. Users shall not use the system to engage in any other illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of another person, etc.
- d. Users shall not use the LPS computing resources for commercial or financial gain or fraud.
- e. Users shall use the system for educational and/or school business purposes only.
- f. Users shall not use the system for political lobbying.
- g. Users shall not post chain letters.
- h. Users shall not post anonymous messages.

#### **2. System Security**

The Lowell Public School's MIS specialist, in cooperation with others will be responsible for the authorization of users, the issuance of passwords, the monitoring of the system, and the tracking of the number of users.

- a. Users shall be responsible for the use of their individual account, if assigned, and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Under no conditions should a user provide their account information and/or password to another person.
- b. Users shall immediately notify the school's Instructional Technology Specialist or the MIS Department if they suspect or have identified a possible security problem. Users will not go looking for security problems, because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.
- c. Users shall avoid the inadvertent spread for computer viruses by following the LPS virus protection procedures if they download software.

#### **3. Inappropriate Language**

Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on web pages. For the purpose of this policy, inappropriate language includes but is not limited to the following:

- a. Users shall not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, racist, sexist, threatening, or disrespectful language
- b. Users shall not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or present danger of disruption to school department operations.
- c. Users shall not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- d. Users shall not harass another person. Harassment is defined as persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a user is told by another person to stop sending them messages, the user must stop immediately.
- e. Users shall not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

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### **4. Respect for Privacy**

- a. Users shall not repost a message that was sent to them privately without first obtaining permission from the person who sent the message.
- b. User shall not post private information about another person.

### **5. Respecting Resource Limits**

Every effort will be made to conserve finite resources. This means that:

- a. Users will check their e-mail frequently, delete unwanted messages promptly, and stay within their e-mail quota.
- b. Users will only subscribe to high quality discussion groups/listservs that are relevant to their current jobs and /or professional/career development with regard to current employment.

### **6. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

- a. Users shall not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is defined as taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as though they were original to the user.
- b. Users shall respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when an individual inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by copyright. If a work contains language that specifies acceptable use of that work, the user should follow the expressed requirements. If the user is unsure whether or not they can use a work, they should request permission from the author or copyright owner.

### **7. Access to Inappropriate Material**

For the purposes of this policy, inappropriate materials are those materials including, but not limited to those materials that do not support the work of the school system.

- a. Users shall not use the WAN to access material that is profane or obscene, that advocates illegal acts, violence or discrimination towards other people.
- b. If a user inadvertently accesses such information, they should immediately disclose the inadvertent access to the Instructional Technology Specialist or the MIS department. This will protect users against allegations that they have intentionally violated the Acceptable Use Policy.

### **8. Consequences of Violations**

In the event that an allegation is brought forward, the employee will be apprised of the allegations and given an opportunity to be heard in accordance with applicable disciplinary procedures. It is every employee's responsibility to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint or alleged violation of the policies by providing information he/she possesses concerning the matters being investigated. Further, it is against city policy to attempt to alter, delete or destroy documents, files, etc. that are the subject of investigation.

Employees should realize that the Network Administrator could recover files that have been deleted. Consequences of violations include but are not limited to:

- Suspension of Internet access;
- Revocation of Internet access;
- Suspension of Network privileges;
- Revocation of Network privileges.

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### ***SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY***

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#### **Introduction**

Lowell Public Schools District (hereinafter “LPS”) acknowledges that it has an obligation to protect student data and to maintain professional boundaries between our staff and the community. LPS recognizes the prevalence of social media used for personal and educational purposes and acknowledges that its employees/staff have the right under the First Amendment to speak out on matters of public concern. However, LPS also has the right to expect employees/staff to conduct themselves in such a way that their personal or educational use of social media does not adversely affect students, employees/staff and/or LPS, and that such use of said social media does not violate any of the rules or policies adopted by LPS.

Social Media are those web sites which serve as communication tools with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation and information sharing in multiple ways and that are in widespread use. As with any technology, these sites have the potential to be misused, to cause harm to others, and to disrupt the school/learning environment. As used herein the term “Social Media” refers to any web site that leverages Social Media, social networking and communications tools for its visitors. Examples include, but are not limited to, books/magazines, internet forums, any form of blogs, social communication flights such as; YouTube, Flickr, FaceBook, texting, Instagram, Wikipedia, Twitter, MySpace, etc., wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video (video, vlogs, live casting), social bookmarking and real-time web communications (chat, chat rooms, video chat, message boards, and similar sites and/or any other form of social media. This Social Media Policy also incorporates by reference the network usage guidelines contained in the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

The LPS recognizes the use of Social Media as an educational tool and views conduct in these environments as an extension of classroom behavior. Therefore, when Social Media is used as educational tool by LPS employees/staff, employees/staff must reflect and demonstrate the same standards as those used in face-to-face/classroom communications within the LPS.

LPS recognizes that students, employees/staff, or other members of the public may create social media sites representing/furthering clubs, teams, or other educational and LPS related groups within the district. When LPS employees/staff choose to join or interact with social media for educational purposes and/or in providing LPS related information, they do so as an agent of the LPS. Employees/staff have a responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee/staff-student relationships at all times and also have the responsibility of addressing and reporting any violations of this policy by employees/staff or students to the Principal, building administrator or direct supervisor.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish protocols for the use of social media by employees/staff and outline expectations for its use regardless of whether social media is accessed by devices owned by LPS or personally by the LPS employee/staff.

This policy does not apply to private (unrelated to either LPS or students) social media usage. This policy only sets forth guidelines for LPS employees/staff describing appropriate and inappropriate uses of existing and future Social Media in furthering and promoting the educational needs of students, in providing/promoting LPS related information/activities, in interacting with students and in the use of the LPS network/devices/email.

This policy, or a reasonable synopsis thereof, will be added to the LPS Policy Manual and the Employee Human Resource Handbook. The Principal must review this policy with employees/staff every year and each employees/staff member must acknowledge in writing receipt of said policy.

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### ***SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: EMPLOYEES***

When LPS Employees/staff are using Social Media to provide information or interact with students, the following guidelines must be followed:

- The Social Media must serve educational purposes or LPS sanctioned activities.
- The Social Media use and communication must be approved by the Principal, building administrator or direct supervisor prior to usage.
- The Principal, building administrator or direct supervisor will have access to such usage and be a recipient of all outgoing communication.
- LPS Employees/staff must have yearly written parental consent prior to engaging students in Social Media. Parents will also be given the option to be included in such Social Media.
- Student images cannot be posted to any Social Media without written parental consent.
- LPS Employees/staff are encouraged to use good judgment. Any questions or comments regarding appropriate Social Media, its usage or a particular communication should be directed to the Principal, building administrator or direct supervisor.
- Employees/staff using social networking tools as part of their educational instruction will create an educational version that is different from their personal version (if applicable). Employees/staff will urge students to do the same to maintain privacy.
- Employees/staff are required to report any information found on Social Media that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines (i.e. 51A) or the bullying prevention and intervention policy, or that would raise a health and/or safety concern regarding a student to the Principal, building administrator or direct supervisor consistent with LPS policy and state and federal laws, in addition to complying with any individual legal obligations set out under state and federal law (i.e. 51A).
- LPS does not prohibit staff from using social media for personal use, but such use is prohibited using LPS networks/devices/email during the work day. Employees may, however, use their own personal devices and social media networks during assigned breaks.
- Social Media use for educational purposes or LPS sanctioned activities must be suspended or disabled from the last day of a school year to two weeks from the start of the next school year.

Consistent with the guidelines expressed in the Internet Acceptable Use Policy School, employees/staff shall NOT use the LPS network to engage in the following conduct

- Employees/staff may not invite/accept any current Lowell student to Social Media as defined by this policy that does not serve/further educational purposes or LPS sanctioned activities.
- Employees/staff are advised to use caution and good judgment in engaging former students in any form of Social Media.
- Employees/staff are advised to use caution and good judgment when giving LPS students their personal cell phone number and should only give this personal information when it furthers educational purposes or supports LPS sanctioned activities.
- Employees/staff shall not post images of any LPS students on any Social Media site without written parental consent.
- Employees/staff will not disclose information on any Social Media that is confidential or proprietary to LPS, its students, or employees/staff or which is protected by LPS policy and state and federal laws.
- Employees/staff will not discuss or share any student information or make defamatory or derogatory comments about students or parents consistent with LPS policy and state and federal laws.
- Employees/staff are prohibited from posting/saving/downloading/etc. any sexually explicit content, items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco, hazing or bullying or any other content/item that would be in violation of LPS policy and/or in violation of state and federal law using LPS network/devices/email.
- Employees/staff are prohibited from posting/saving/downloading/etc. any information that is reasonably considered to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene (as defined by state or federal law) using LPS network/devices/email.

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- Employees/staff are prohibited from using Social Media or LPS network/devices/email to post or communicate inaccurate or false information regarding LPS, employees/staff, students, parents, or the LPS community or that would violate state or federal law.
- Employees/staff who engage in private social media usage cannot infer/suggest/insinuate to the participants/recipients of the private social media usage that this private Social media usage is sanctioned by LPS.
- Employees/staff will not use their LPS email/network/devices for communications on Social Media unless such use furthers educational purposes or supports/furthers LPS sanctioned activities.

The above are solely examples of acceptable and unacceptable uses and are not intended to be all inclusive. Any conduct which is similar to that listed above is likewise prohibited. All employees are expected to comply with LPS policies, including the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

#### **Disciplinary Procedures**

The Superintendent or assigned designees reserves the right to view employee/staff public or LPS internet Social Media usage to determine if materials violate this policy. In addition, any computer, email, cell phone, or other devices provided by the LPS to employees/staff are the property of the LPS and the Superintendent, or assigned designees reserves the right to examine such device without notice. When an inappropriate use of LPS computer, email, cell phone, or other device and/or a Social Media Policy violation is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the employee/staff and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The LPS disclaims all liability for the content of material that users' access on Social Media, for damages suffered in the course of or as a result of Social Media use, and for any related consequences. The LPS shall not be responsible for any unauthorized use of the LPS network, including any unauthorized costs, financial obligations, fees, charges or purchases.