

Employee Use of Electronic Communications

Technology provides a multitude of methods for communicating either unidirectionally or bidirectionally with students, parents, staff and the community at large. These include but are not limited to: phone calls, texts, instant messages, photo sharing, emails, webinars, websites, wikis, blogs, tweets, and streaming media. Any such use of communication by our employees will follow the guidelines laid out here.

Use of Cooperative-provided Sites and Services

When communicating electronically with anyone regarding Cooperative matters, Cooperative-provided sites and services should be utilized over personal ones. For example, employees should use:

- 1) A Teachwell.org email account instead of a private 3rd party hosted email account.
- 2) A Coop-provided device instead of a privately-owned device.
- 3) A Coop website, mobile app or 3rd party service instead of an equivalent personal web service.

A Coop-managed site or service will be clearly labeled as such. Such sites and services will be reviewed for possible policy and copyright violations. Sanctions will be imposed for violations, up to and including dismissal from employment. Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy with respect to the utilization of Coop property, including but not limited to use of Coop-provided wifi connections. Employees should also be aware that all use of the Cooperative network on personal devices may result in personal information being saved to the Coop network through routine Maintenance and backup activities. Employees wishing to utilize personal devices should also refer to policy GBEF-Use of Personal Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Devices concerning privacy rights when using such devices.

All material posted to a Coop website is subject to review and removal by the administration or designee for violation of copyright or policies. No copyrighted material will be posted without proper permission from the copyright holder (this includes student created work). If the student creator is a minor, permission must be received from the student's parent or guardian prior to posting.

Personal Electronic Communications

The Coop recognizes that employees have the right under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to speak out on matters of public concern using any non-school medium, including the right to communicate with students and others on matters of public concern during non-duty time. It is also recognized that Coop employees may need to contact students through electronic media concerning school-related matters. All such electronic communication is subject to the following criteria:

- While Coop employees have a Constitutional right to speak out as a citizen on matters of public concern, such right does not extend to personal communications through social media that are not a matter of public concern or that are made while speaking as an employee of the Coop. Inappropriate online activity which is accessible by students or members of the school community coupled with identification as a Coop employee on a third party web site or in social media can result in employee discipline.

- All electronic communication by Coop employees with students that are initiated outside of Coop email and networks by shall be copied to another adult who is either the student's parent/guardian, or the Coop Director, Principal or Dean of Students.
- When communicating with students or with others concerning students, Cooperative employees shall comply with South Dakota's Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers as established by the South Dakota Professional Practices and Standards Commission. All Coop employees shall be provided with a copy of the code and encouraged to become familiar with its contents. All staff, including non-teaching staff, are expected to abide by the requirements of the Code.
- Prohibited communication conduct by Coop staff includes, but is not limited to:
 - Improper fraternization with students via any communication medium.
 - Communication with students via a social media platform that does not create a communication record, such as Snapchat.
 - Posting items or sending messages containing inappropriate sexual content.
 - Posting items or sending messages exhibiting or advocating use of drugs or alcohol.
 - Posting items that violate the privacy of, intimidate or disparage students.
 - Inviting or accepting invitations from current Coop students, except for the staff person's relatives, into any personal social networking sites. Personal social networking sites do not include those maintained for professional purposes such as club sports, religious groups, scouting groups, art or theatre groups, etc.

Acceptable Use Agreement

Cooperative employees and students utilizing cooperative electronic communications shall be provided with an "Acceptable Use Agreement" developed by Administration in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing schools and computer use. Execution of the Acceptable Use Agreement constitutes consent for the Cooperative to search all devices used in electronic communications through the Cooperative's networks.

Policy Adopted: May 16, 2018