

Personnel - Certified and Non Certified

Instruction

Use of New Web Tools (Blogging/Podcasting)

Online communication is critical to our students' learning of 21st Century Skills and to the communication efforts of the staff. Tools such as blogging and podcasting offer authentic, real-world vehicles for student and staff expression. As educators, our primary responsibility to students is their safety. Hence, expectations for classroom blogs, student/staff protected e-mails, podcasts, or other Web interactive use must follow all established Internet safety guidelines.

Blogging/Podcasting Terms and Conditions

- ☐ The use of blogs, podcasts or other Web 2.0 tools is considered an extension of the classroom. Therefore, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is also inappropriate in all uses of blogs, podcasts, or other Web 2.0 tools. This includes, but is not limited to, profanity and racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks.
- ☐ Teachers must monitor all communication on blogs, podcasts, or other Web 2.0 tools that are used by students in the classroom.
- ☐ Students and staff using blogs, podcasts or other web tools are expected to act safely by keeping all personal information out of their posts.
- ☐ A student should never post personal information on the web (including, but not limited to, last names, personal details including addresses or phone numbers, or photographs). Do not, under any circumstances, agree to meet someone you have met over the Internet.
- ☐ Any personal blog a student creates in class is directly linked to the class blog which is typically linked to the student profile, and, therefore, must follow these blogging guidelines. In addition to following the information above about not sharing too much personal information (in the profile or in any posts/comments made), students need to realize that anywhere they use their blog login it links back to the class blog. Therefore, anywhere that login is used (posting to a separate personal blog, commenting on someone else's blog, etc.), the account should be treated the same as a school blog and should follow district blogging guidelines. Comments made on blogs should be monitored and - if they are inappropriate - deleted.
- ☐ Never create a link to web sites from your blog or blog comment without reading the entire article to make sure it is appropriate for a school setting.
- ☐ Students using such tools agree to not share their user name or password with anyone besides their teachers and parents and to treat blogspaces as classroom spaces. Speech that is inappropriate for class is also inappropriate for a blog.
- ☐ Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the project and/or be subject to consequences appropriate to misuse.
- ☐ The use of school mascots, symbols, logos or other district trademarks is prohibited.
- ☐ Blogging is prohibited during the school day unless it is a part of a classroom/instructional activity.
- ☐ The use of school district property for personal blogs is prohibited.
- ☐ Employees shall not develop any classroom or work-related websites, blogs forums, or similar online communications representing the District or using District equipment or resources without permission of the Superintendent or his/her designee. Such sites shall be subject to rules and guidelines established for District online publishing activities including, but not limited to, copyright laws, privacy rights, and prohibitions against obscene, libelous, and slanderous content. Due to the unfiltered nature of blogs, any such site shall include a disclaimer that the District is not responsible for the content of the messages. The District reserves the right to delete material on any such online communications.

Employees and students who create a blog may not violate the privacy rights of employees and students, may not use District personal and private information/data, images and copyrighted material in their blog, and may not disrupt the District.

Administrators may visit the blogs at any time.

Students or staff engaging in gross disobedience and misconduct may be disciplined for creating and/or distributing written or electronic material, including Internet material and blogs, that causes substantial disruption to school operations or interferes with the rights of other students or staff members.

(cf. [4118.4/4218.4](#) - E-Mail (Electronic Monitoring) (staff))

(cf. [4118.5/4218.5](#) - Staff Acceptable Computer Network Use)

(cf. 5131.913 - Cyberbullying)

(cf. [6141.321](#)- Student Acceptable Use of the Internet)

(cf. [6141.322](#) - Websites/Pages)

(cf. [6141.323](#) - Internet Safety Policy/Filtering)

(cf. [6141.321](#) - Acceptable Use of the Internet)

(cf. [6141.322](#) - Web Sites/Pages)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[1-19\(b\)\(11\)](#) Access to public records. Exempt records.

[10-15b](#) Access of parent or guardians to student's records.

[10-209](#) Records not to be public.

[11-8a](#) Retention, destruction and transfer of documents

[11-8b](#) Transfer or disposal of public records. State Library Board to adopt regulations.

[46b-56 \(e\)](#) Access to Records of Minors.

Connecticut Public Records Administration Schedule V Disposition of Education Records (Revised 1983).

Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended, added by section 513 of PL 93 568, codified at 20 U.S.C. 1232g.).

Dept. of Education. 34 CFR. Part 99 (May 9, 1980 45 FR 30802) regs. implementing FERPA enacted as part of 438 of General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) parent and student privacy and other rights with respect to educational records, as amended 11/21/96.

HR 4577, Fiscal 2001 Appropriations Law (contains Children's Internet Protection Act)

Public Law 94-553, The Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C. 101 et. seq.

Reno v. ACLU, 521 U.S. 844 (1997)

Ginsberg v. New York, 390 U.S. 629, at 642, n.10 (1968)

Board of Education v. Pico, 457 U.S. 868 (1988)

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 620, 267 (1988)

Policy adopted:

4118.52/4218.52

6141.325

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This is a set of general guidelines for the use of web blogs ("blogs") in the District. Blogs are considered an extension of the classroom and therefore are subject to these guidelines as well as the rules and regulations of the District. The use of school computers is limited to assigned schoolwork; personal blogs that do not pertain to classwork in District schools should not be accessed from school computers. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive nor do they cover every contingency. If students are ever in doubt about the appropriateness of an item, a parent or teacher should be consulted. Staff members unsure of the appropriateness of an item should consult with the administration.

Safe and Responsible Blogging

The most basic guideline to remember when blogging is that the blog is an extension of the classroom. Students/staff should not write anything on a blog that one would not say or write in the classroom. Common sense should be used, but when in doubt a teacher, parent or administrator should be consulted whether or not what one is considering posting is appropriate. Here are some specific items to consider:

1. The use of blogs is considered an extension of the classroom. Therefore, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate on a blog. This includes, but is not limited to, profanity; racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks; personal attacks.
2. Blogs are used primarily as learning tools, either as extensions of conversations and thinking outside of regular class time, or as the basis for beginning new classroom discussions. Either way, be sure to follow all rules and suggestions that are offered by teachers/administrators regarding appropriate posting in your class.
3. Blogs are about ideas - therefore, agree or disagree with the idea, not the person. Freedom of speech does not give an individual the right to be uncivil. Use constructive criticism and use evidence to support your position. Read others' posts carefully - often in the heat of the moment you may think that a person is saying one thing, when really they are not.
4. Try not to generalize. Sentences that start with words like "All" (e.g., "All teachers," "All administrators," "All liberals," "All conservatives") are typically going to be too general.
5. Blogs are public. Whatever is posted on a blog can be read by anyone and everyone on the Internet. Even if a post or comment is deleted, it has often already been archived elsewhere on the web. Students and or staff should not post anything that they wouldn't want parents, friends, enemies, or a future employer to read.
6. Blog safely. NEVER post personal information on the web (including, but not limited to, last names, personal details including address or phone numbers, or photographs). (*Note: The advice to not use a last name is for the individual's protection. Teachers may choose to use their last names for their posts/comments. Do not, under any circumstances, agree to meet someone met over the Internet.*)
7. Because a login to the blogging site (e.g., Blogger) is typically linked to a person's profile, any personal blog created in class is directly linked to a class blog and must follow these blogging guidelines. In addition to following the information above about not sharing too much personal information (in a profile or in any posts/comments made), students need to realize that anywhere they use that login links back to their class blog. Therefore, anywhere that you use that login (posting to a separate personal blog, commenting on someone else's blog, etc.), they need to treat the same as a school blog and follow these guidelines. Students and staff should also monitor any comments received on their personal blogs and, if they are inappropriate, delete them. If students would like to post or comment somewhere and not follow these guidelines, they need to create a separate login to the blogging site so that it does not connect back to their class blog. They may not use that login from school computers. The District still recommends the students follow the portion of these guidelines that address their personal safety (e.g., not posting personal information, etc.)
8. Linking to web sites from a student or staff member's blog or blog comments in support of an argument is an excellent idea. They should never link to something without reading the entire article to make sure it is appropriate for a school setting.
9. Use of quotations in a blog is acceptable. The proper formatting and citing the source of the quote is to be followed.

10. Pictures may be inserted into a blog. The image must be appropriate for use in a school document and copyright laws shall be followed. Images that can identify a student or others shall not be posted.

Successful Bloggers

The following are some traits of successful bloggers:

1. Their posts (or comments) are well written. This includes not only good content, but - because these are school-related blogs - also follows writing conventions including spelling, grammar and punctuation.
2. Their posts (or comments) are responsive. They respond to other people's ideas - whether it is a post by a teacher, a comment by a student, or an idea elsewhere on the Internet. The power of blogs is in their connectedness - they are connected to a larger community of ideas. Participate in that community.
3. Their posts (or comments) include textual references to support their opinions. Adding quotes or links to other works strengthens their response.
4. They participate frequently. To be part of the dialogue, you have to participate fully and consistently.
5. They are respectful of others. It's okay to disagree; it's not okay to be disagreeable. Be respectful of others and their opinions, and be civil when you disagree.

(cf. [4118.4/4218.4](#) - E-Mail (Electronic Monitoring) (staff))

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Regulation approved: