

## SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

The Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System (hereinafter “ACCESS”) adopts the following policy governing the issue of social networking and access of social networking sites. Employee use of social networking sites refers to the use of a set of on-line tools, such as web pages and sites where content may be added and/or uploaded by users and shared with others. Examples include, but are not limited to, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Orkut, Digg, Wiki and MySpace.

Employee use of social networking sites during work hours should be directed at the use of internet sites that enhance the service and instruction delivered to our member school districts, and in particular, any customer that ACCESS serves. Employees should be aware that their private, non-work use of social networking sites may have unintended consequences on their employment.

The same laws, ACCESS policies and guidelines, and standards of conduct for interacting with our member school districts, students, parents, and others apply online as in the real world. This includes, but is not limited to, the ACCESS Handbook, Standards of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy, harassment policies, etc. ACCESS employees may be liable for anything they post to social media sites to the same extent they would while communicating in any other form.

The objective of this policy is to establish some guidelines with respect to the use of personal web pages and social networking sites by the employees of ACCESS. Our members rely upon the public confidence and trust in the services we provide to students, while effectively protecting their rights to privacy, and respecting our employees’ First Amendment Rights. ACCESS employees do not have the right to post inflammatory comments that could compromise our mission, undermine client or staff relationships or authority, or cause a substantial disruption of our, or our member school districts’, educational programs. As such, this policy may apply to employees’ online conduct that occurs off ACCESS property and/or not during work time and may include posts made from an employee’s private electronic device. Any social network posting that undermines the professional responsibilities of our employees and/or administrators, has the corresponding effect of reducing public confidence and trust in how ACCESS discharges its duties.

While employees during non-working time have the right to use personal/social networking pages or sites, they should abide by the following:

### BEST PRACTICES

- **Think twice before posting:** Keep in mind that once you post it on social media, you cannot control it. There is no privacy in the social media world. If you would not say it in person, consider whether you should post it online.
- **Be respectful:** Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas.
- **Remember your audience:** Anything that is posted on social media is, or easily can be, made available to the public at large. As a result, your message can/will be viewed not only by your target audience, but also peers, colleagues, current and prospective employers, ACCESS Community Members and others.
- **On personal sites:** Identify your views as your own. If you identify yourself as a ACCESS staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of ACCESS.
- **Be polite, courteous, and respectful in your messages:** You should always strive to hold yourself to the highest professional standards in interacting with others, whether through social media or otherwise.

## GUIDELINES

- A. Employee use of social networking sites during work-time should be directed at the use of internet sites that enhance the services provided to member school districts, instruction delivered to ACCESS students, and/or for fulfilling other job responsibilities. Incidental personal use of social media during work-time is only allowed in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy.
- B. Employees should not use their staff assigned email addresses as the contact email address for any personal social networking web page or site.
- C. Photographs or other depictions of the ACCESS Programs, logos, or students shall not be used on employee internet postings, without prior written authorization from a student's parent (in the case of a student photo) or the administration (in the case of logo use).
- D. Employees may not represent their opinions or comments as those of the ACCESS or the Administration.
- E. Employees shall not discuss or divulge any personally identifiable information about a student or proprietary information. Transmission of any material in violation of any State or Federal law or regulation or Board policy is prohibited.
- F. Employees are prohibited from engaging in discriminatory harassment based on race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national/ethnic origin or other characteristic that is intrinsic to a person's identity. ACCESS employees are also prohibited from posting, broadcasting or otherwise disseminating any sexually explicit, obscene, inflammatory, violent, racial, ethnically harassing or discriminatory material, comments, pictures, art work, video, or other references on their web pages and/or social networking sites, or through any other medium of communication. Employees are prohibited from engaging in inappropriate social networking relationships with students. Such prohibition includes, but is not limited to, online flirting, bantering with sexual overtones, and extending social invitations to students.
- G. Employees shall not discuss any ongoing investigations involving themselves or fellow staff on any internet sites or social medium sites or networking. This prohibition includes any files, pictures, written statements, and videos involving students, administrators, and staff. Employees are prohibited from making defamatory statements involving ACCESS programs, staff or students.
- H. Administrators are discouraged from "friending" their subordinates on social medium platforms.
- I. Employees shall not violate and will be aware of copyright laws.

Employees may be asked to acknowledge that they have read and are familiar with this policy. Violation of any of the foregoing guidelines and/or this policy may lead discipline, up to and including the termination of employment with ACCESS.