Social Networking Guidance   January 14, 2019

Ohio County Schools takes the conduct of its students and staff members seriously, and the school system strives to maintain the professional reputation it has established. Ohio County Schools officials understand that social networks are now used by nearly everyone. Popular social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are not specifically designed for educational use. For most individuals, social networking sites provide opportunities for individuals to remain in touch with friends and family.

Ohio County Schools recommends the following guidelines for use of social media networks by school system employees:

- Do not accept students as friends on social networking site. Decline any student-initiated friend request.
- Do not initiate friendships with students.
- Remember that those classified as "friends" have the ability to download and share your information with others.
- Post only what you want others to see. Know that students, their parents, your administrator, and members of the community have the ability to view your site. A message or photo posted on your social-networking site may be available to others even after you removed it from the site.
- Do not discuss students or coworkers on a social-networking site.
- Visit your profile's security and privacy settings. Educators should have all privacy setting to "only friends." "Friends of friends" and "network and friends" makes your content available to a large group of people, even those not known to you. Your privacy could be at risk.

Ohio County Schools recognizes the value of student/teacher interaction on educational networking sites. Collaboration, research sharing, and dialogue can be facilitated through the use of educational networking tools. Such interaction is important in online educational activity. Therefore, guidelines are necessary for educational networking.

Guidelines for educational networking sites by school employees:

- Let your administrator, fellow employees, and parents know about your educational network.
- Use school-supported network tools when available.
- Do not say, do, or post anything on an educational network that you would not say or do in a traditional educational setting. Remember that all online communications are stored and can be monitored.
- Establish a clear statement of purpose and outcomes for the use of the networking tool.
- Establish a code of conduct for network participants.
- Do not post images of students without a parental release on file.
- Pay close attention to the site's security settings. Allow only approved participants access to the site.

Guidelines for all networking sites by employees:

- Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous. Use caution with regard to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted material, legal conclusion, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.
- Determine whether a post puts your effectiveness as an employee at risk.
- Be aware of security risks, and be cautious when installing external applications that work with the social networking site. Examples of these sites are calendars and games.
- Run updated malware protection to avoid infections of spyware and adware that social networking sites may place on your computer.
- Do not fall for phishing scams that arrive via email or on your wall.
- Staff members who learn of information on a social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting must report it as required by law.