

EMPLOYEE INTERNET POSTINGS POLICY

This Internet Postings Policy applies to employees who post on the following:

1. Social networking websites including, but not limited to, MySpace and Facebook;
2. Blogs;
3. Wikis including, but not limited to, Wikipedia; *AND*
4. Other websites and message boards.

(All of the above-activities shall be referred to as "Internet Postings")

The Sevier County School System encourages and respects its employees' rights under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Therefore, employees should not read this Policy to deter or limit their constitutionally protected freedoms.

As representatives of the Sevier County School System, however, employees must maintain professional and appropriate relationships with their students and the community at large. Since many Internet Postings are available to the general public, employees' public postings should remain professional and appropriate for minor students' viewing.

The same level of scrutiny will not apply to employees' private postings. Private postings include, but are not limited to, matters found on encrypted sites and *invite only* networks. If any when an employee makes those private postings available to students or parents, however, those postings should be treated as public and handled with the appropriate care.

The Sevier County School System simply asks its employees to apply the same amount of care to their Internet personas as they currently pay to their public reputations.

A. Liability

Employees should understand that they can be held legally responsible for Internet commentary. For example, an employee could be held personally liable for any commentary deemed defamatory, obscene, confidential or libelous. Therefore, employees should exercise caution with regard to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions and derogatory remarks. Employees must also understand that the Sevier County School System shall not be liable for any errors, omissions, losses or damages claimed due to those employees' Internet Postings.

B. Confidentiality

Sevier County School System employees often find themselves privy to confidential education records. Such confidential information should never be shared or posted on the Internet in any forum (i.e., public or private).

C. Representation

If an employee's Internet Postings or profiles identify him/her as a representative of the Sevier County School System or its schools, each posting or profile should be accompanied by the following disclaimer: "the views expressed on this site are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Sevier County School System." Furthermore, an employee's Internet Postings or profiles should not include trademarks/logos associated with the Sevier County School System or its schools.

D. Association

Many Sevier County School System employees' Internet Postings appear on sites officially associated with the System and/or its schools. The System and its administrators retain editorial control over any Internet Postings found on those officially associated sites. As such, an employee must obtain written permission from the Sevier County School System to associate or link his/her personal site or blog to an officially associated site.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION.

Distributed August 12, 2009 by Dr. Jack A. Parton, Director of Schools