

Staff Expression

The Wenatchee School District board believes the district has an interest in maintaining an orderly and effective work environment while balancing employees' First Amendment rights to freedom of expression and diverse viewpoints and beliefs, including on controversial issues as defined in District Board Policy number 2331. However, district staff are expected to take care to avoid conduct that may substantially interfere with their ability to perform their duties consistent with district policies and procedures, or that would foreseeably cause a substantial disruption to the operation of the school/district. When employees speak within their official capacity, their expression represents the district and may be regulated. The First Amendment protects a public employee's speech when the employee is speaking as an individual citizen on a matter of public concern. Even so, employee expression that has an adverse impact on district operations and/or negatively impacts an employee's ability to perform their job for the district may still result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Whenever staff are performing job responsibilities, using district facilities as employees, or reasonably appear to be acting in their role as a district staff member, they are governed by district policies and procedures as existing or amended from time to time, including but not limited to 2020 (Course Design), 2331 (Controversial Issues/Guest Speakers), 4237 (Contests, Advertising and Promotions), 5201 (Drug-Free Schools, Community and Workplace), 5253 (Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries), and 5011 (Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited). This includes an obligation to maintain an environment that is free from discrimination, prejudice, and facilitates the free exchange of facts and ideas between students and teachers, while promoting the district's official core values and mission.

The private and personal life of any employee, including participation in social media platforms, is not within the appropriate concern or attention of the district. Employees who use social media platforms are encouraged to remember that the school community may not be able to separate employees as private citizens from their role within the district. Employee expression on social media platforms that interferes with the district's operations or prevents the district from functioning efficiently and effectively may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

The procedures that accompany this Policy will adhere to this policy and specify particular district standards for staff expression, including the conditions under which a staff member can participate in written or non-verbal expression. Any violation of this Policy or adopted Procedure may result in disciplinary action.

Cross References: 2340 - Religious-Related Activities and Practices
 5252 - Staff Participation in Political Activities

Legal References: RCW 41.06.250 Political activities

RCW 42.17A.555 Use of public office or agency facilities in campaigns - Prohibition - Exceptions

RCW 42.17A.635 Legislative activities of state agencies, other units of government, elective officials, employees

Adoption Date: **6.23**

Classification: **Discretionary**

Revised Dates: