

EMPLOYEE-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- POLICY -

The Board prohibits improper employee-student relationships and improper employee-student electronic communications.

- REGULATION -

1. DEFINITIONS

Cloud Application – shall mean any service or resource available on the internet including such services or resources as virtual servers or any electronic storage that is outside of the School District’s firewall, including such things as iCloud; OneDrive; Adobe Creative Cloud; Dropbox; Evernote; and other similar services.

Educational Services – constitutes provision of direct and indirect classroom instruction, as well as extracurricular activities provided by the School District.

Electronic Communication - includes any communication by phone, tablet or computer. It includes the communication of email, video, photos, audio, text, symbols and any other form of data, and pertains to both personal and school district-issued devices. Examples include e-mail, text messaging, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts, Skype, Viber, WeChat, and WhatsApp.

Electronic Device – includes: (i) desktops; (ii) workstations; (iii) tablets (e-readers, iPads etc.); (iv) laptops; (v) servers; (vi) routers; (vii) digital switches; (viii) smart phones; (ix) PDA’s; and (x) any other digital device in the nature of any of the foregoing.

E-mail – messages distributed by electronic means from one computer user to one or more recipients via a network.

1. DEFINITIONS (continued)

Improper or Inappropriate Communications – any communication from an employee to a student, regardless of who initiates the communication, that may be viewed as derogatory, sexual or lewd in content, suggestive in nature, threatening or harassing, discriminatory, discloses the personal information of the employee or discloses the personal information of other students.

Social Networks – locations on the Internet where users may interact with other users -- examples are Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram.

Student Record – shall mean any item of information gathered within or outside the district that is directly related to an identifiable student.

Text Messaging – the transmission and receipt of information between cellular telephone numbers or the transmission of information from an email address to a cellular telephone number.

2. GUIDELINES

The Board prohibits any type of close personal relationship between an employee and a student that may be reasonably perceived as outside of professional boundaries. An example would be an employee giving a student personal attention outside of school.

Employees shall not communicate with, entertain, socialize with, or spend time with students, in such a manner as to reasonably create the impression to other students, their parents, or the public that an improper relationship exists.

All electronic communication conducted by an employee with a student must be relative to the educational services provided to the student and shall be delivered by means provided by or otherwise made available by the school district for this purpose.

Approved school district electronic communication methods are school district email, school-sponsored teacher websites, school websites, school-provided phones and other electronic communication that is approved by the school district.

Employees are prohibited from electronic communication with students for any purpose not related to educational services unless specifically authorized in writing by a supervisor.

2. GUIDELINES (continued)

Text messaging to parents and students, related to educational services, between 7:00 p.m. and 7 a.m. is not permitted. Text messaging to parents and students, related to

educational services, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. should only be used sparingly and as a secondary choice to school district e-mail.

Employees shall not use their personal accounts on social networks to communicate with any student or parent. Employees wishing to use social networks to communicate with parents and students regarding educational services may create a separate professional social media account for that purpose.

Employees on a disciplinary suspension or administrative leave are prohibited from communicating with any student without express prior written approval from the Superintendent.

Employees are prohibited from downloading or saving any student record on any computer, network or cloud application owned, leased or in an account possessed by the employee that is not a computer or network drive that is owned by the school district.

All employee electronic communication with parents and students is subject to inspection by a supervisor. Employees should consider all electronic communication to be on the record. Therefore employees must maintain professionalism at all times by using correct grammar and tone and by choosing appropriate subject matter and word choice.

3. REPORTING PROCESS

The occurrence of any electronic communication made by an employee with a student using means other than ones provided by or made available by the school district shall be reported in writing by the employee to his/her supervisor no later than 24 hours after the occurrence or knowledge of the occurrence.

Student-initiated communication that may be construed as inappropriate in content, as defined in this policy, must be reported in writing to the employee's supervisor no later than 24 hours after the occurrence or knowledge of the occurrence.

Records of any reported communication shall be maintained by supervisors for a period of at least one year.

It is the duty of each employee to comply with this policy. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

4. EMPLOYEE VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. The employee utilizes a school district or personal electronic communication system to communicate with a student for non-educational services.

-
- b. The employee fails to report an instance of communication using a non-school district electronic communication system.
 - c. The employee fails to report an instance of student-initiated communication that may be construed as inappropriate in content.

Any violations or suspected violations of this policy should be reported to the employee's supervisor immediately. The supervisor will promptly, thoroughly and fairly investigate reports of an alleged violation or this policy.

Violations of this policy may result in discipline of the employee up to and including termination of employment. A violation of this policy by an employee that may also be a violation of law shall be reported to the proper authorities. Some acts are considered criminal and may be subject to prosecution. The school district will fully cooperate with law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting such criminal offenses.

5. EXCEPTION

In the event an employee has a family relationship or friendship with a student's family, the employee does not violate this policy by communicating in a manner that exceeds the boundaries of educational services.