

EMPLOYEE-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- POLICY -

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

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.

- 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.

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 may support students in activities outside of school and these guidelines are not intended to prevent such support.

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.

Text messaging to parents or students between 10:00 p.m. and 6 a.m. is not permitted unless requested by the parent. Text messaging to parents or students, related to educational services, between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. should only be used sparingly, unless the parent or student concerned does not use 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 or students regarding educational services may create a separate professional social media account for that purpose.

Employees may only save student records on computers, networks or cloud applications with appropriate information safeguards e.g., passwords or encryption.

GUIDELINES (continued)

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. Employees must maintain professionalism at all times.

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

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 outside of the guidelines.
- b. 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 appropriate supervisor immediately. The supervisor will promptly, thoroughly and fairly investigate reports of an alleged violation of 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 and 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.