

SERIES 500 – PERSONNEL

General Personnel Policies – 520

Professional and Support Staff Rules in having Electronic Communications with Students (522.91)

Employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the District through electronic media, except as set forth herein. An employee is not subject to this prohibition to the extent the employee has a pre-existing social or family relationship with the student. For example, an employee may have a pre-existing relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization.

The following definitions apply for purposes of this section on Electronic Communication with Students:

“Authorized Personnel” includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, assistant principals, directors of instruction, coaches, campus athletic coordinators, athletic trainers, and any other employee designated in writing by the District Administrator or a building principal.

“Communicate” means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication; however, the employee may be subject to District regulations on personal electronic communications. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.

“Electronic media” includes all forms of social media, such as, but not limited by enumeration to, the following: text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (email), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video sharing websites (e.g., YouTube™), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook™, MySpace™, Twitter™, LinkedIn™), and all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

Authorized Personnel may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the District only within the following guidelines:

1. The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests).
2. If an employee receives an unsolicited electronic contact from a student that is not within the employee's professional responsibilities,

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the employee shall not respond to the student using any electronic media except to address a health or safety emergency.

3. The employee is prohibited from communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for this purpose. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
4. Only a teacher, coach, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may communicate with students through text messaging. The employee may communicate only with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility.
5. Upon request from the administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
6. Upon receiving a complaint or written request from a parent, the administration may direct an employee to refrain from communicating with the parent’s minor student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

Violations

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including written reprimands, suspensions and possible discharge. This policy will be part of the employee handbook given to staff at the beginning of each school year.

Approved: 7/17/2017

Cross Reference: Board Policy 522.2
Board Policy 522.9