

Policy

**STAFF USE OF INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKS AND
OTHER FORMS ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

Social Networking Websites

The superintendent/principals will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

- A. Improper fraternization with students using social networking websites on the internet:
 - 1. Teachers may not list current students as "friends" on networking sites;
 - 2. All e-contacts with students should be through the district's computer and telephone system;
 - 3. All contact by coaches with team members shall be sent to all team members;
 - 4. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district;
 - 5. Inappropriate contact via e-mail or phone is prohibited;
- B. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content;
- C. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol;
- D. Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid;
- E. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology;
- F. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the school principals and superintendent will download the offensive material and promptly bring that misconduct to the attention of the board's personnel committee for review.

Cell Phones

School staff shall not contact parents'/guardians' or students' cell phones unless directed to do so by the parent/guardian or student. School district personnel shall limit cell phone interaction with students to contact that pertains to legitimate school business. Legitimate school business includes:

- A. Answering academic inquiries regarding homework, other classroom work or assignments;
- B. Scheduling appointments for school related conferences and/or extra help;
- C. Clarifying classroom expectations and/or assignments;
- D. Notifications related to classroom, club or sports schedules, events, trips, assignments; deadlines.

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Cell phone contact with students shall be as brief and direct as possible. When brief contact is not sufficient and/or feasible to resolve the matter, teachers shall schedule face to face conferences during regular classroom and extra-help periods to confer with the student. No contact shall exceed three replies.

Text Messages

No staff member, coach or volunteer shall text message any student individually. All text messages to students shall be sent to the class, team, club or organization. Staff shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as profane or obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illicit, illegal or unethical activity; or messages:

- A. That violate the district's affirmative action policy;
- B. That are personal in nature and not related to the business of the district;
- C. That can be interpreted as provocative, flirtatious or sexual in nature;
- D. That contain confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information.

Computer Communication

School district personnel shall adhere to the following guidelines when sending or receiving messages via internal or external email:

- A. All messages shall pertain to legitimate school business;
- B. Personnel shall not reveal passwords to others. If a staff member believes that a password has been lost or stolen, or that email has been accessed by someone without authorization, he/she should contact the Help Desk immediately. Email windows should not be left open on the screen when the computer is unattended;
- C. Messages and email files shall be deleted in a timely manner. The network system operator may archive and then delete messages that are retained after 90 days unless other arrangements are approved by the superintendent or the appropriate district personnel responsible for technology. The network system operator shall ensure that all email records shall be retained for the period of time specified by law and board policy 3570 Records (retained three (3) years for external correspondence and one (1) year for internal correspondence);
- D. To ensure that federal copyright laws are not violated, staff shall not send messages that contain text without the author's permission;
- E. Staff shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illegal or unethical activity; or messages:
 - 1. That violate the district's affirmative action policy;
 - 2. That are personal in nature and not related to the business of the district;
 - 3. That are broadcast to a large group of other personnel without supervisory permission;
 - 4. That contain confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information.
- F. Personnel shall become familiar with the district's policies and regulation on staff and student access to networked information resources before initiating email use;

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- G. Employees learning of any misuse of the email systems shall notify the supervisor for technology immediately.

Implementation

This policy shall be distributed annually to all staff members.

NJSBA Review/Update: March 2013
Adopted: October 17, 2013

Key Words

Employee Conduct, Cell Phones, Text Messaging, E-Mail

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:6-10 Dismissal and reduction in compensation of persons under tenure in public school system
N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
N.J.S.A. 18A:27-4 Power of boards of education to make rules governing employment of teacher, etc.
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)

Hicks v. Pemberton Bd. of Ed., 1975 S.L.D. 332

Quiroli v. Linwood Bd. of Ed., 1974 S.L.D. 1035

Carlstadt Teachers Ass'n v. Carlstadt Bd. of Ed., App. Div., unreported decision (docket no. A-1469-80-T4, decided March 26, 1982), 1982 S.L.D. 1448

Possible

Cross References: 4117.50 Standards for staff discipline
4119.2 Responsibilities
*4119.21 Conflict of interest
*4119.22 Conduct and Dress
*4119.23 Employee substance abuse
4119.24 Staff/student relations
*4138 Nonschool employment
*4138.2 Private tutoring
*6144 Controversial issues

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.