

SOCIAL MEDIA

Introduction

“Electronic media” includes all forms of social media such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g. YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g. Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunications such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

“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 CISD regulations or guidelines on personal electronic communications. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.

Use of Electronic Media with Students

Policy DH

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the district through electronic media.

An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a 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. An employee who claims an exception based on a social relationship shall provide written consent from the student’s parent. The written consent shall include an acknowledgement by the parent that:

- The employee has provided the parent with a copy of this protocol
- The employee and the student have a social relationship outside of school;
- The parent understands that the employee’s communications with the student are excepted from district regulation; and
- The parent is solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

- *Electronic media* includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), 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, , Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). *Electronic media* also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.
- *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. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

- The employee may use any form of electronic media **except** text messaging. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility. An employee who communicates with a student using text messaging shall comply with the following protocol:
 - The employee shall include at least one of the student’s parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message;
 - The employee shall include his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and supervisor receive the same message; or
 - For each text message addressed to one or more students, the employee shall send a copy of the text message to the employee’s district e-mail address.
- 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; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity. Personal views and opinions may not be shared through a professional page.
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.

- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The network page, which must be CISD approved, must be accessible to both administrators and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators Code of Ethics, including:
 - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
 - Copyright law [See Policy CY]
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DHB]
- Upon request from 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 one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.

Electronic Media Use with Parents

Designated employees may use electronic media to communicate with parents of currently-enrolled students about matters within the scope of employees' professional responsibilities. However, information about student performance and behavior should not be sent via text- messaging. All non-school-email-based communications that pertain to the scope of the employees' professional responsibilities shall be forwarded to the employees' school email accounts.

Employee Personal Use of Electronic Media

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interests with the

employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page and for web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.
- The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.
- The employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators Code of Ethics, even when communication regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These Restrictions include:
 - Confidentiality of student records (See Policy FL)
 - Confidentiality of health or personal information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. (See Policy DH)
 - Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses (See Policy GBA)
 - Copyright law (See Policy CY)
 - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system (See Policy DH)

Campus Use - Social Media

Campus accounts will be held to the same professional standards as district accounts. Approved social media accounts include Facebook, Twitter, a blog and Youtube for the district. Campuses may have a Twitter handle and a facebook page to be managed at the campus level.

Campus pages must maintain CISD approved logos and branding for title pages, cover photos and profile pictures. The Public Relations Director must have login information or administrator rights on campus pages in case of a communication emergency.

All users of campus social media pages must be trained on appropriate use of social media prior to being allowed to post on behalf of the campus.

Employee Use - Social Media

Employees who are prohibited from using electronic media with current students may not knowingly allow students access to the employee's personal networking site or webpage. Employees who are designated as being allowed to communicate with students may not knowingly allow students to access the employee's personal social networking site or webpage that portrays sex, nudity, alcohol or drug use, or other behaviors associated with the employee's private life that would not be appropriate to discuss with a student at school. Employees should not accept students as "friends" on personal social networking sites and should not initiate friendships with current students. Employees who do so, do so at their own risk.

Social Media is ever evolving and changing. Live streaming features such as Facebook Live and Periscope are becoming increasingly popular. Employees are not permitted to go live during the workday or on CISD property. The exception to this rule will be if the livestream is written into a pre-approved lesson plan and has educational merit. These lesson plans must be approved by both the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and the Public Relations Director prior to going live.

Crandall ISD reserves the right to request removal of any post, video or live stream from an employee's account.

The Code of Ethics (19 T.A.C. 247.1 & 2) is included in this Employee Handbook. The Code includes the following standard which specifically addresses communication with students. For the purposes of expected behavior, this Code applies to all employees regardless of job title or classification:

Educators' Code of Ethics – Standard 3.9:

Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- the subject matter of the communication;
- whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- whether the communication was sexually explicit; and

- whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student

Violation of this policy as well as any CISD policies, regulations or guidelines may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment.