



# HUM-W050 – STAFF USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION TOOLS

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## WORK INSTRUCTION

### HUMAN RESOURCES

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#### SUMMARY

Many roles require that staff communicate directly with students, families, or community members. The instructions for how to do so professionally and within safe and healthy boundaries follows.

#### INSTRUCTION

1. Employees must ensure that all communication with students and parents/guardians is professional and remains within safe and healthy boundaries. See PAP-W006, “Maintaining Appropriate Staff-Student Boundaries” or the annual mandatory staff training for more information.
2. District email, ParentSquare, and Microsoft Teams are the preferred and authorized tools for communicating with students outside of instruction. Text messaging (other than through the ParentSquare platform) and personal social media accounts are not approved forms of communication.
  - a. See INS-W036 for information on school-sanctioned social media accounts.
  - b. Student Workers: District staff may communicate with current students via text messaging when the students are employed by the District and the messages are related to their employment.
3. Employees are expected to use District-approved platforms for instruction. These platforms have been vetted for safety features that help protect students and staff members.
4. Employees should consider the following questions when sending or responding to electronic communication from a student:
  - a. What is the topic of the conversation?
    - i. The focus of the conversation should remain on academics (“Don’t forget to turn in your assignment by Friday”), school-sponsored activities (“Practice is canceled on Thursday”), or safety concerns.
    - ii. Employees must exercise caution when communicating electronically with students about personal issues and avoid conversations that could be perceived as inappropriate in nature. Communication should be limited to that which is necessary for the education benefit or safety of the student.
    - iii. Report safety concerns to the appropriate authorities and school personnel.
  - b. Is there transparency in the communication?
    - i. Whenever possible, electronic communication should involve more than one employee and one student. An employee could meet virtually with a small group of students rather than an individual student, involve the parent/guardian in the conversation when appropriate, or ask a co-worker to participate in the meeting. If individual meetings are necessary, the employee shall use a District-approved electronic communication tool that maintains a record of all conversations.
    - ii. Employees are encouraged to problem solve situations they encounter with their supervisor.
  - c. What is the time and place?
    - i. Employees are encouraged to communicate with students and parents during their workday. Employees who monitor messages outside of their work hours are responsible for making an immediate report if they become aware of a situation involving student safety or other emergencies.

- ii. Employees should not engage in communication with students late at night or on the weekend, with the exception of employees involved in district-approved programs who are working a shift assigned by their supervisor (e.g., the counselor warmline).
- d. Are messages sent infrequently or on a regular basis?
  - i. Employees are encouraged to regularly use electronic communication tools to engage with parents and groups of students. Individual communication between one employee and one student should be limited.

**APPLICABILITY**

- All employees who communicate with students or parents/guardians.

**ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- PAP-W006: Maintaining Appropriate Staff-Student Boundaries
- INS-W036: Social Media Accounts, School Sponsored

**APPROVAL AUTHORITY**

- Executive Director of Human Resources

**REVISION HISTORY**

- 09/09/20 – Initial Work Instruction.
- 09/13/23 – Updated the preferred communication platform from Remind to ParentSquare.
- 10/27/23 – Added related policies.
- 02/21/24 – Updated Heading styles to meet accessibility requirements.