

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

DH
(REGULATION)

EMPLOYEE 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 interferes 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, that employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

EXCEPTIONS FOR
SOCIAL OR FAMILY
RELATIONSHIPS

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.

DEFINITION OF
ELECTRONIC MEDIA

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 Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn). *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. 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.

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DH
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STANDARDS FOR
COMMUNICATING
WITH STUDENTS
USING ELECTRONIC
MEDIA

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.

All communications between teachers and students must be appropriate. Factors that will be used to determine whether teacher-student communication is inappropriate include:

- 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.
- 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.

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

- The employee shall limit communications with students and parents 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).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students and parents 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 must declare the existence of a school based social networking page. The naming convention for any school based social networking site is as follows: PFISD then the teacher's first and last name in the heading. All existing

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accounts must reflect this naming convention. Parents and students will be made aware of the existence of these social networking pages at the beginning of each academic school year.

- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, 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 [Policy EFE]
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DF]
- 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 any 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.