

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS

### Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- *Electronic communication* includes, but is not limited to, use of social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), instant messaging, private email accounts (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo), chatting (including, but not limited to, video and voice chat), online forums, online games, short messaging services (including, but not limited to, texting), and blogs/web feeds.
- *Student* is defined as any individual currently enrolled in district schools or any individual formerly enrolled in district schools who is under the age of 18.

### Restrictions Contained in Other District Policies

The District has created policies governing student-staff relations, confidentiality, and employee speech. These policies govern on-duty and off-duty conduct, including when engaged in electronic communications. The District has also established policies governing staff's on-duty use of the Internet and electronic devices. In addition, teachers are governed by the ND Code of Professional Conduct for Educators.

### Purpose of this Policy

The Board believes that staff access to students in an unmonitored environment has a detrimental impact on the professional relationship between students and staff. The District strives to preserve the privacy of students; however, electronic correspondence of district employees may be subject to open records laws and/or district record retention requirements.

### Restrictions

The District prohibits staff from corresponding electronically with students except through use of district email accounts through a district-administered social network, and/or through other school-sponsored applications. A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with district policy, law, and, if applicable, the negotiated agreement. The District should consult with its legal counsel before making a dismissal decision under this policy.

This policy does not apply to electronic communication with a student who is an employee's family member.

### Enforcement

The District shall investigate any suspected or alleged violation of this policy and may, but is not required to, actively monitor websites to ensure employee compliance with this policy.

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Complementing NDSBA Templates (may contain items not adopted by the Board)

- ACDA, Acceptable Use
- DE, Staff Code of Conduct
- DEAD, Employee Use of Electronic Devices
- DEBA, Confidentiality
- DEBD, Student Staff Relations

**SUPPLEMENTARY**

Descriptor Code: DEBG

- DEBF, Employee Speech

**End of Yellowstone Policy DEBG ..... Adopted: 8/17/2020**

**Reviewed 1/20/2025**