

***HAZELWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES***

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Introduction

The Hazelwood School District (HSD) communication guidelines rely on longstanding traditions, proven strategies, and compliance with Board of Education policy. This document is meant to be helpful in two ways: to orient new employees and to serve as a communication resource for returning employees.

Philosophy

The purpose of the Communications and Public Relations Department is to shape HSD's internal and external reputation through: employee engagement, parent communication, public relations, and media relations. The team is committed to providing consistent, accurate, and timely information to stakeholders.

Communications and Public Relations Team

Jordyn Elston

Director of Communications and Public Relations

Office: 314-953-5005

Cell: 314-807-2069

jelston@hazelwoodschoools.org

Britt Williams

Secretary to the Director of Communications and Public Relations

Office: 314-953-5045

bwilliams5@hazelwoodschoools.org

Travis Green

Communications Specialist II

Office: 314-953-5044

tgreen1@hazelwoodschoools.org

Chesney Stittum

Communications Specialist I

Office: 314-953-5057

cstittum@hazelwoodschoools.org

Aaron Hoffman

Webmaster/Graphics Specialist

Office: 314-953-5056

ahoffman@hazelwoodschoools.org

Alex Peterson

Video Specialist

Office: 314-953-5058

apeterson@hazelwoodschoools.org

Communication Protocols

News Media Interviews

All communications with the news media regarding HSD, including broadcast and print interviews, must be approved by the Communications and Public Relations Department. The exception is district coaches commenting exclusively on details about athletic events.

News Media Photographs/Videos

Any photographs or videos taken by the news media on school property must be approved by the Communications and Public Relations Department.

News Media Contact

If a member of the news media contacts you about a potential story:

- **Do**
 - Tell them to contact the Communications and Public Relations Department.
 - Treat members of the news media with respect and kindness.
 - Return to your regular job duties after following the guidelines above.
- **Do Not**
 - Share any information about the location of any HSD employee or student.
 - Confirm or deny details about emergency situations, HSD students, policy, or announcements.

School Incidents

The details of incidents that result in news media attention or may result in news media attention should be shared with the appropriate Assistant Superintendent and the Communications and Public Relations Department immediately. Examples of these incidents include, but are not limited to: weapons found on campus, protests, and deaths. Additionally, if first responders are called to a school, in addition to immediately notifying the Director of School Safety and the appropriate Assistant Superintendent, the Communications and Public Relations Department should be notified. The appropriate Assistant Superintendent will inform the building principal if a message needs to be sent out. The Communications and Public Relations Department will work with the appropriate Assistant Superintendent to draft any messages that may be needed for distribution by the building principal.

Parent Letters

Throughout the school year, principals will share letters for a variety of reasons. Any such letters do not need to be approved by the Communications and Public Relations Department. The exceptions are letters related to COVID-19 tests or building closures prompted by COVID-19. The Communications and Public Relations Department, Human Resources Department, and Health Services Coordinator will create those letters.

School Closures

School closure announcements due to various circumstances, including severe weather, will be shared through the following communication channels:

- Automated phone call, text message, and HSD email (keep your contact information up to date).
- Local news media.
- HSD social media pages.
- HSD websites.

Photo/Video Opt-Out

The district and individual schools may take pictures/videos of students for the purpose of highlighting positive news. Families may opt-out of participating in photos/videos. Individual schools have opt-out lists. Students on opt-out lists can still participate in virtual school and be recorded by teachers as long as it is for the purpose of creating a recorded lesson for students who missed class ([See FERPA on page 8](#)).

Story Submissions

The Communications and Public Relations Department is always searching for positive stories to share about HSD. Employees are encouraged to share news story ideas and interesting photos/videos with the Communications and Public Relations Department. Submissions can be sent to info@hazelwoodschools.org or any member of the Communications and Public Relations Department.

Branding

In written communications, refer to the district as Hazelwood School District on the first reference and HSD thereafter.

Fonts/Point Size

Use a single space after punctuation for all print materials: letters, newsletters, brochures, etc. For parent letters, brochures, newsletters, and other publications, please use the following:

- Font: Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri
- Size: 12 point (primarily for main content of releases).
- Use a minimum point size of 11 for newsletters with multiple columns/sections.
- For articles posted to the website, please reformat your document to the following:
 - Font: Verdana.
 - Size: 12 point.

District Colors



Hazelwood Blue
CMYK – 100/72/0/6
RGB – 0/83/159
00529f

Black
CMYK – 0/0/0/100
RGB – 35/31/32
231f20

Email

Email Replies

Do not use the “reply to all” option for emails sent to multiple employees unless everyone who received the initial email needs to receive the response.

Email, Call, and Text Responses

Responses to emails, calls, and texts are expected within 24 hours. Exceptions include vacation days, professional development days, and when the district is closed.

Automatic Vacation Responder Email Replies

Employees are expected to set up automatic vacation responder email replies when they will be unavailable for extended periods of time. When possible, the replies should include contact information for another employee who can respond to requests. To set up a vacation responder, follow the instructions below:

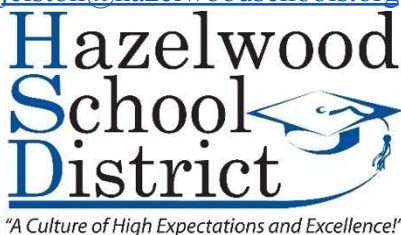
- Access your Gmail account.
- Click on the tool wheel in the upper right corner.
- Click on “Settings.”
- Scroll down to the vacation responder section.
- Click “Vacation responder on.”
- Enter the first day and last day of your vacation in the date section.
- Type your desired vacation responder subject line.
- Type your desired vacation responder message in the empty box.
- Click “Save” at the bottom of the page.

Email Signatures

All who use email should have an email signature. Email signatures should not include your favorite quote or any special characters. They should include the HSD “A Culture of High Expectations and Excellence!” logo or a building logo, which can be saved directly from this document. Employees who work in a specific school should include the name of their school in the email signature under their job title. Contact the helpdesk at helpdesk@hazelwoodschools.org if you need assistance creating a signature. The signatures should adhere to one of the following formats:

- **Administration Office Standard Signature:**
Jordyn Elston
Director of Communications and Public Relations
Office: 314-953-5045

jelston@hazelwoodschools.org



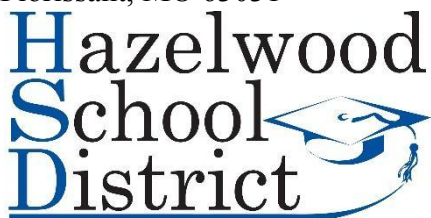
- **Administration Office Extended Signature:**
Jordyn Elston
Director of Communications and Public Relations
Office: 314-953-5005

Cell: 314-807-2069

jelston@hazelwoodschoools.org

15955 New Halls Ferry Road

Florissant, MO 63031



"A Culture of High Expectations and Excellence!"

- **School-Level Signature:**

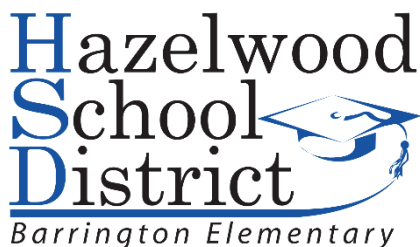
Jordyn Elston

Science Teacher

Barrington Elementary School

Office: 314-953-5005

jelston@hazelwoodschoools.org



To set up an email signature, follow the directions below:

- Access your Gmail account.
- Click on the tool wheel in the upper right corner.
- Click on "Settings."
- Scroll down to the email signature section.
- Type the appropriate signature in the open field.
- Use the insert image button the function bar below the signature field to add the logo.
- Use the cursor to size the image to fit underneath your signature text.
- Click "Save" at the bottom of the page.

Social Media

Social Media Pages

Individual schools manage their own social media pages with the guidance of principals. The Communications and Public Relations Department manages the following social media pages:

- Facebook @HazelwoodSD
- Twitter @HazelwoodSD

- Instagram @hazelwood_school_district

Personal Social Media Page Guidance

When posting on personal social media:

- **Do:**
 - o Share images, videos and news directly from official HSD affiliated social media accounts.
 - o If you have questions, contact the Communications and Public Relations Department.
- **Do Not:**
 - o Share photos or videos of students on your personal social media pages. The exception to the aforementioned guideline is using the “share” or “retweet” social media features to post items directly from official HSD affiliated social media accounts that include photos or videos of students. Examples of HSD affiliated accounts include the district accounts, individual school accounts, and club/activities accounts, such a football team’s Twitter account.
 - o Assume that your social media posts are private. It is very easy for news media, HSD employees, Board members, and community members to gain access to information on social media.

Consequences of Negative News Media/Social Media Attention

- It damages the district’s reputation.
- It has a negative impact on the self-image of all current employees and students.
- It makes it harder for our district to attract top talent.
- It hurts enrollment, which impacts funding for resources and salaries.
- It can also have an adverse impact on career opportunities for employees.
- Finally, it rarely solves problems. Typically, it exacerbates problems.

Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in a Virtual Environment

Question: Can teachers record virtual classes and share the recording with students who were unable to attend class?

Answer: Yes. It is permissible under FERPA to record classes and share the video recording of the virtual class with students who were unable to attend. The teacher must take care not to disclose personally identifiable information from student education records during a virtual lesson. Video records of virtual classroom lessons only qualify as “education records” under FERPA if they directly relate to a specific student and are maintained by the school district. A recording of a whole class lesson should not generally be considered an education record for a specific student and should not be maintained in a specific student’s records. However, if the recording is maintained in a specific student’s record (perhaps, for example, as a record of misconduct engaged by the student during class), it would become a protected education record. When video recording, the record should only be shared through a system that is accessible to the class members. For example, the recording could be saved through Goggle Meet/Google Classroom to a specific class. Parents viewing the recording is not a problem. However, the recording should not be made public.

Question: Can teachers conduct parent/student conferences from home?

Answer: Yes. As long as the teacher does not reveal information from the student's education record within hearing of other members of the teacher's household. Teachers must take precautions to minimize the likelihood of others in the home overhearing confidential student information.