

POLICY

PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF EDUCATION
TEACHING STAFF MEMBERS
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3282 – STAFF ACCEPTABLE USE OF INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKS AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Pequannock Board of Education (hereinafter “Board”) recognizes that the Internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis.

The school district strongly encourages all staff members to carefully review the privacy settings on social networking sites they use and exercise care and good judgment when posting content and information on such sites. Staff members should adhere to the following guidelines, which are consistent with the district's workplace standards on harassment, pupil relationships, conduct, professional communication, and confidentiality.

When using personal social networking sites, school staff members:

1. Should not make statements that would violate any of the district's policies, including its policies concerning discrimination or harassment;
2. Must uphold the district's value of respect for the individual and avoid making defamatory statements about the school district, employees, pupils, or their families;
3. May not disclose any confidential information about the school district or confidential information obtained during the course of his/her employment, about any individual(s) or organization, including pupils and/or their families;
4. Shall not use social networking sites to post any materials of a sexually graphic nature;
5. Shall not use social networking sites to post any materials which promote violence or advocating the use of drugs or alcohol;
6. Shall not use social networking sites which would be detrimental to the mission and function of the district;
7. Are prohibited from using their school district title as well as adding references to the district in any correspondence including, but not limited to, e-mails, postings, blogs, and social networking sites unless the communication is of an official

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nature and is serving the mission of the district. This prohibition also includes signature lines and personal e-mail accounts;

8. Shall not post updates to their status on any social networking sites during normal working hours including posting of statements or comments on the social networking sites of others during school time unless it involves a school project; and

Improper fraternization with students using social networking websites on the internet:

1. Teachers may not list currently enrolled students as “friends” on personal networking sites;
2. All e-contacts with students should be through the district’s email domain (@pequannock.org);
3. All contact by coaches with team members shall be sent to all team members;
4. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers to students;
5. Inappropriate contact via e-mail or phone is prohibited.

The Policy of this district is to maintain a level of professionalism both during and after the school day. Any publication through any means of electronic communication which is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the district, will be deemed a violation of this Policy. If the Board or Superintendent believes that a staff member's activity on any social networking site violates the district's policies, the Board or Superintendent may request that the employee cease such activity. Depending on the severity of the incident, the staff member may be subject to disciplinary action.

This Policy has been developed and adopted by this Board to provide guidance and direction to staff members on how to avoid actual and/or the appearance of inappropriate conduct toward pupils while using social networking sites.

Text Messages/Cell Phones

No staff member, coach or volunteer shall text message or contact by cell phone any student individually. All text messages to students shall be sent to the entire class, team, club or organization.

Computer Communication

School district personnel shall adhere to the following guidelines when sending or receiving messages via email to students:

- A. All email messages must be through the District email domain (@pequannock.org) for both teachers and students and shall pertain to legitimate school business.

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- B. Personnel shall not reveal passwords to others. If a staff member believes that a password has been lost or stolen, or that email has been accessed by someone without authorization, he/she should notify the Principal and the Superintendent, and then the staff member will contact IT immediately. Email windows should not be left open on the screen when the computer is unattended.
- C. The network system operator may archive messages. The network system operator shall ensure that all email records shall be retained for the period of time specified by law.
- D. To ensure that federal copyright laws are not violated, staff shall not send messages that contain text without the author's permission.
- E. Staff shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illegal or unethical activity.
- F. Personnel shall become familiar with the district's policies and regulation on staff and student access to networked information resources before initiating email use.
- G. Employees learning of any misuse of the email systems shall notify the supervisor for technology immediately.
- H. The Board reserves the right to monitor all employee usage of the district's electronic communication systems and to intercept and review any communication, in any format, using those systems, including but not limited to, social media postings and activities.

Adopted: 3 December 2012