

### **Traceable Communications**

In accordance with Senate Bill 181 and KRS 160.145, the Board of Education will designate a traceable communication system to be the means for District employees and volunteers to communicate electronically with students. (Effective June 27, 2025)

**A district employee or volunteer, unless authorized, shall *NOT* communicate electronically with a student:**

1. Outside of the traceable communication system designated by the Board; or
2. This shall not restrict any electronic communications between a student and their family member who is employed by or volunteers for Hancock County Public Schools. Family members are defined in the law as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters. Family members that are NOT listed in the defined statute, thus are not considered exempt are cousins, step-family members, and etc.
3. This applies to all HCPS student and staff communication, regardless of whether it is professional or personal.

### **HCPS Communication Tools Approved for Use with Students**

Hancock County Public Schools is committed to using safe and secure methods for communicating with students. Our approved platforms for communication to students for school-related communication are:

- Apteegy: Our district-provided platform is designed for two-way communication between schools, teachers, and parents/guardians.,
- Google Workspaces: Our district's digital productivity suite, including Gmail, Classroom, Docs, Slides, and Sheets

**Staff members shall NOT use or create personal social networking accounts to which they communicate directly with or invite students to be “friends”.**

1. This includes closed group pages, such as classroom pages and club/organization pages, etc. All of these accounts will need to be deleted.
2. You will also need to check your personal social media accounts and remove any current students you may have “friended” in the past.
3. Official school or district pages can continue to share happenings with comments turned off, but please refrain from tagging students in posts. You can respond to

comments, but ONLY in a public forum, not through Facebook Messenger or any similar one-on-one messaging.

### **Consent Forms**

A parent may submit written consent to authorize a designated District employee or volunteer who is not a family member to communicate electronically with their child outside of the traceable communication system. However, this will not be used for mass or group communications for teams, clubs, or extracurricular activities. The consent form will be available on our district website.

All district-sanctioned teams, clubs, and extracurricular activities must use the approved two-way communication software; the consent form is not an acceptable method for opting out. These Consent forms may be used for non-school-related communication with students. The parent may submit a consent form allowing you to communicate with their child using a non-traceable method. Senate Bill 181 does not apply to school board members or any outside vendors, such as School Resource Officers, Family Health Care Nurses, Owensboro Health Athletic Trainers, Parent Teacher Association volunteers, Site Base Council Parent Representatives, and etc.

### **Reporting Violations**

KRS 160.145 also creates a duty for school district employees and volunteers to report to the supervising principal (or to the superintendent if the principal is the subject of the report), when they receive a report alleging that another school district employee participated in unauthorized electronic communication with a student. If the subject of the report is the superintendent, the employee shall immediately notify the commissioner of education and the chair of the local board of education. Principals and superintendents are required to immediately notify the parents of the students involved, investigate the report, and proceed with the appropriate disciplinary action. If the subject of the report is a certified employee, the principal or superintendent must also notify the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB). This notification will occur regardless of the outcome of any internal investigation.