

Senate Bill 181

Staff-Student Communication Policy (Traceable Communications)

[Board Policy 08.2324](#)

The Board designates the following platforms as the **exclusive traceable communication systems** for electronic communication between District staff/volunteers and students:

- ParentSquare
- Google Classroom
- Microsoft Office 365 applications (e.g., Outlook, Teams, OneDrive)

All communications between staff/volunteers and students **must occur through these designated platforms** to ensure traceability and parental access.

Additional Information:

[KRS 160.145- Senate Bill 181 \(LINK\)](#)

[KSBA FAQ Document \(LINK\)](#)

Kentucky Senate Bill 181, which took effect on **June 27, 2025**, is legislation that establishes new statewide standards to ensure that all communication between school personnel and students is **traceable, transparent, and professional**. The goal is to foster a safe, accountable, and supportive learning environment for everyone.

Key Highlights of SB 181 Related to Communication

- **Traceable & Accessible Communication:** All electronic communication between school personnel and students must be traceable and accessible by the school district.
- **Prohibited Platforms:** Use of private or encrypted messaging apps (e.g., Snapchat, Messenger, Band, WhatsApp, or personal texting apps that do not retain records) is **prohibited for school-related communication**.
- **Social Media Restrictions:** Private, one-on-one social media communication between staff and students is **not allowed**, except in cases involving **immediate family members** unless a **district-approved waiver** is on file.
- **Communication Archives:** Districts are required to **maintain archives** of all official school-related communications with students.

Whitley County Schools Compliance Plan

In compliance with Kentucky Senate Bill 181 (SB181) and Whitley County Board Policy 08.2324, the District establishes the following requirements regarding electronic communication between District employees or volunteers and students:

1. Approved Communication Platforms

The Board designates the following platforms as the **exclusive traceable communication systems** for electronic communication between District staff/volunteers and students. Effective immediately, staff must use only the following **district-approved platforms** for communication with students:

- ParentSquare
- Google Classroom : *Staff must follow the district's Google Classroom Archiving Policy to ensure SB 181 compliance.* All Google Classrooms no longer in use must be archived—not deleted—as they may contain instructional materials or communications subject to public records retention requirements under SB 181. Archiving preserves access for audits and future reference. This policy applies to all Google Classroom usage within the district.
- Microsoft Office 365 applications (e.g., Outlook, Teams, OneDrive)

All communications between staff/volunteers and students must occur through these designated platforms to ensure traceability and parental access. These platforms support **message archiving and administrative oversight**.

2. Social Media Guidelines

While SB 181 does **not** mandate staff to unfriend or unfollow students on personal social media accounts, it **strictly prohibits** untraceable private communication.

Strong Recommendation: All certified staff, classified staff, and volunteers are **advised to unfriend/unfollow students on personal social media** by **June 27, 2025**, unless the student is an **immediate family member**.

3. Parental Notification

Within the first ten (10) days of each school year, principals will provide parents or guardians written or electronic notification listing the designated traceable communication platforms used in their child's school. Notifications will include instructions on how parents can access and review communications sent through these platforms.

4. Waiver for Traditional Communication Tools

Parents/guardians wishing to allow the use of traditional or non-designated communication methods must complete a consent waiver form. This waiver authorizes a designated District employee or volunteer who is not a family member to communicate electronically with their child outside of the approved traceable communication systems.

Submission Options:

- **Preferred Method – ParentSquare:**

Waiver forms should be sent to parents/guardians via ParentSquare post or direct message as an attachment. Parents can also access blank forms from our district website at any time. Completed forms should be filled out and returned through ParentSquare for record-keeping and compliance purposes.

- **Paper Submission:**

Parents may request a paper waiver form, which must be completed and returned to the school office for processing. If this happens, I suggest returning a copy to the Parent via ParentSquare to help with record retention.

Important Guidelines:

- A separate waiver must be completed for **each child** and for **each designated employee or volunteer** who is not an approved family member.
- Multiple children and/or multiple staff members may **not** be listed on the same form.
- Completed waivers must be reviewed and approved by the school before non-designated communication may occur.

Important Note on Waivers and Risk:

Even with a signed parent waiver, the use of untraceable platforms—especially those that auto-delete messages—carries significant legal and safety risks. The District strongly encourages exclusive use of district-approved platforms for all communication whenever possible.

[Board Policy Consent Form/Waiver \(LINK\)](#) (This form must be completed by all parties and returned to your school for approval)

Important Note on Waivers and Risk

Even with a signed parent waiver, the use of untraceable platforms—especially those that auto-delete messages—**carries significant legal and safety concerns.**

To ensure legal compliance and safeguard all parties, we **strongly encourage exclusive use of district-approved platforms** for student communication.

5. Restrictions on Electronic Communication

- District employees or volunteers **shall not communicate electronically** with students outside of the designated traceable communication systems unless authorized by prior written parental consent via a signed waiver.
- Unauthorized electronic communication includes use of personal email, text messaging, social media, or other non-designated platforms without consent.
- These restrictions **do not apply** to electronic communication between a student and a family member who is a District employee or volunteer.
- “Family member” includes parent, guardian, sibling, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, or grandparent.

Staff Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements

- SB 181 applies to **all school personnel and volunteers**. Any employee supervising or working with volunteers must ensure those individuals understand and follow these communication rules.
- In addition, if you become aware of any **unapproved or untraceable communication** between a student and an employee or volunteer, you are **legally required** to report it to your **principal** or **Human Resources** immediately.
- Any District employee or volunteer who receives a report alleging unauthorized electronic communication must immediately notify the building principal.
- If the allegation involves the principal, notification must be made to the Superintendent.
- If the allegation involves the Superintendent, notification must be made to the Kentucky Commissioner of Education and the Chair of the local Board of Education.
- Upon receipt of such reports, appropriate investigations and disciplinary actions will be conducted in accordance with Kentucky Revised Statutes and district policies, including but not limited to KRS 156.132, 160.145, 161.011, 161.120, and 161.790.
- Disciplinary consequences may include suspension of privileges, termination, or prohibition from volunteer activities as applicable.