



# Minneota Public School District District Procedures

Adopted: December 2025

## DISTRICT PROCEDURES: STAFF COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES USE OF PERSONAL VS. DISTRICT COMMUNICATION TOOLS

### 1. PURPOSE

To maintain professional boundaries, ensure transparency, and protect both staff and students, Minneota Public Schools expects all school-related communication with students and parents/guardians to occur through district-approved channels.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Consistent, professional, and timely communication among staff, students, and families is essential to supporting student learning and fostering trust within the community. Establishing clear expectations for communication hours, the use of personal devices, and engagement with parents and guardians promotes professionalism and protects the well-being of all staff members. These procedures are intended to:

- ⇒ Demonstrate the district's commitment to **respectful and responsive communication**.
- ⇒ Ensure **clarity and consistency** in communication across all schools and grade levels.
- ⇒ Provide **documentation and accountability** in all staff–family interactions.
- ⇒ Reinforce **professional boundaries** and promote a healthy work-life balance for staff.
- ⇒ Strengthen **trust and transparency** between the district, staff, and families.

### 3. APPROVED COMMUNICATIONS METHODS

All communication related to school business, activities, or student matters must occur using one or more of the following district-approved platforms:

- ⇒ District email accounts (e.g., @minneotaschools.org).
- ⇒ District-approved communication tools (such as JMC, Seesaw, Google Classroom, or Remind).
- ⇒ School-provided phones or messaging systems.
- ⇒ Official district social media or activity accounts (when approved by administration).

### 4. RATIONALE

Using district communication tools:

- ⇒ Ensures records of communication are accessible if needed for documentation.
- ⇒ Helps the district meet data privacy and record retention requirements (Minn. Stat. §13.32 – the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act).
- ⇒ Protects student privacy and staff professionalism.
- ⇒ Reduces the risk of misunderstandings or unmonitored exchanges.

5. **STAFF COMMUNICATIONS HOURS**

To promote a healthy work-life balance and maintain professionalism in communications, staff are expected to conduct work-related communications (including emails, phone calls, texts, and messaging) during established hours, **7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**, Monday through Friday. Communications outside these hours should be limited, typically for **urgent or emergency situations** that require immediate attention. Supervisors and staff are encouraged to plan ahead and respect these boundaries whenever possible.

6. **PERSONAL CELL PHONES AND ACCOUNTS**

Staff should not use personal cell phones, personal email accounts, or personal social media accounts/applications to communicate with students or parents regarding school matters. Exceptions may be granted by an administrator only in urgent or emergency situations where district tools are temporarily unavailable.

If an exception occurs, staff should:

- ⇒ Limit the communication to factual, school-related information.
- ⇒ Notify an administrator as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Transition the conversation back to a district-approved platform once feasible.

7. **PERSONAL PHONE AND COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

To protect both staff and students and to maintain professionalism:

- ⇒ If staff need to use personal phones for work purposes—such as during a field trip—use should be limited to short, necessary voice calls.
- ⇒ Staff should not share personal phone numbers with students or families.
- ⇒ If a personal phone must be used, a brief follow-up email from the staff member’s district account should summarize the communication for documentation purposes.

8. **EXPECTATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Staff are responsible for using district systems appropriately and checking district email regularly.

The line between professional and personal relationships can be blurred within the context of social media. When employees choose to join or engage with school district students, families or fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside those approved by the district, they are advised to maintain their professionalism as district employees. Employees are responsible for their behavior or activity on these networks. Employees must report inappropriate student behavior, illegal actions or violations of school district policies governed by mandated reporting to their supervisor.

Employees have a responsibility to maintain appropriate employee-student relationships, whether on or off duty. Both case law and public expectations hold educational employees to a higher standard of conduct than the general public. Employees are expected to ensure the safety of students. When employees, including coaches and co-curricular advisors, choose to join or engage with social networking groups, they do so as an employee of the district and have responsibility for monitoring content and reporting inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks. Employees are responsible for protecting the safety of minors. State and federal-mandated reporting laws apply to school district employees participating in the social media context.

Employees must protect confidential information. Students, parents, and colleagues should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Ask permission before posting someone's picture on a social network or publishing a conversation that was meant to be private. Student photos require parental consent. It is acceptable to discuss general details about projects, lessons, or events and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for an individual (e.g., Teacher A) so long as the information provided does not make it easy for someone to identify the individual or violate any privacy laws. Furthermore, public social networking sites are not the place to conduct school business with students or parents.

District social media technologies are provided for educational use. Use of social media for personal use during district time or on district equipment is prohibited. Social media published times during the work day reflect negatively on the district and may result in disciplinary action. Repeated use of personal communication tools for school business may be subject to administrative review and corrective action.

Questions about approved tools or access should be directed to building administration or technology staff.

#### **9. PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT**

All interactions—verbal, digital, or written—should reflect the highest standards of respect, professionalism, and student safety.

The privacy and reputations of students, families, and employees will be respected and protected. Information which might damage the reputation of students or staff members shall not be released, except as provided by law or by other Board policy.

When in doubt, communicate through official district systems or seek administrative guidance before sending messages through any personal channel.

#### **10. RECORD RETENTION AND DOCUMENTATION**

Staff should not delete school-related communications until retention timelines are met. The district may archive digital messages for compliance under Minn. Stat. §138.17 and FERPA.