

Director Procedure Number: DP305

Title: Electronic Communications between Employees and Students or Parents/Guardians

Section: Personnel – All Employees - Welfare

Electronic Communications between Employees and Students or Parents/Guardians

1. Usage

All electronic communications occurring at any time by employees to EASTERN students, including former EASTERN students who are minors (collectively referred to as “students”), and parents/guardians are to be completely professional.

EASTERN employees are strongly discouraged from using personal email, text messaging, instant messaging, social-networking accounts (such as Facebook), websites, and any other applications for communications covered by this Policy with parents/guardians and students unless specifically authorized by EASTERN pursuant to procedures set forth in these procedures.

Some examples of permitted communications include the following:

- Employee is the parent/guardian of a student.
- Employee is the aunt or uncle of a student.
- Employee is the grandparent of a student.
- Employee has a relationship with the parent/guardian independent of the employee's relationship with the student.

Regarding the use of text messages, the Joint Committee realizes this may be a form of electronic communication that is especially valuable in certain contexts when the possibility of immediate and/or urgent contact with students by employees is desirable. Such contexts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Employee advisors of extra-curricular programs or activities who need the ability to reach student participants quickly.
- Employees chaperoning EASTERN field trips who need the ability to monitor the locations of students.

If an employee plans to communicate electronically with students through the use of text messages, the employee must obtain permission prior to the communication to do so from the Director or designee. Also, if permission is received, the employee must not only provide students' parents/guardians with written notification of the intent to use text messaging (unless the employee can obtain permission in another form), but must also obtain written parent/guardian permission to do so using the consent form attached hereto as Attachment A. Attachment B must be used by employees to obtain prior parent/guardian consent for an employee to communicate by personal email with a former student who is a minor.

Improper and/or inappropriate electronic communication between employees and students is prohibited, regardless of whether the employee or the student initiates the communication. Improper and/or inappropriate electronic communication includes, but is not limited to, any type of message that may be viewed as:

- Derogatory;
- Sexual, lewd, pornographic, or obscene in content;

- Offensive through the use of profanity;
- Threatening or harassing;
- Discriminatory;
- Facilitation of illegal activities;
- Having the purpose to assist personal, commercial or for-profit ends;
- Expression of political viewpoints;
- Unauthorized or illegal distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials;
- Fraternization or otherwise crossing the line between professional and personal boundaries; and/or
- Suggestive in nature.

2. Reporting

Any electronic communication made by an employee to a student or that is received by an employee from a student, using a means other than one provided by or authorized by EASTERN or the parent/guardian, shall be reported by the employee to the Director or designee using Attachment C.

Employees must report to the Director or designee any student-initiated electronic communication that may be construed as improper and/or inappropriate. This includes communications shared by parents/guardians with an employee, such as an intercepted text message sent to the child of the parent/guardian by another student. Such reports shall be made immediately or at the employee's first available opportunity.

Records of any reported electronic communications, as described herein, shall be maintained by the Director or designee in accordance with EASTERN's record retention schedule.

3. Violations

Employees shall be required to comply with Joint Committee policy regarding electronic communications with students. Any failure to do so may constitute cause for disciplinary action consistent with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, up to and including termination from employment. Should an employee's failure to comply also violate state or federal law, the Director or designee shall report such violation to the proper authorities.

Any suspected violation of this policy shall be immediately investigated by the Director or designee. The investigation shall include dates, the name of the person reporting the allegation, and the specific allegation made.

The Director or designee shall meet with the employee to document his/her response to the allegation. All information from the investigation shall be documented.

Investigation records shall be maintained by the Director or designee in accordance with EASTERN's record retention schedule.

4. Notification

The Director or designee shall ensure that upon hiring, all new hires shall be informed of the provisions of this policy.

Adopted: 3/13/13

EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology

Consent Form for EASTERN Employee/Student Text Messaging

Permission of the parent or guardian must be obtained, in writing, in order for an EASTERN employee to communicate with a student via text messaging.

Class or Extracurricular Activity:

Student Name: _____

Student's cell phone number: _____

_____ I give my permission for my child's cell phone number to be used for communications with _____
for classroom assignments and the following activities:

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____
(please print)

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Note: Form Expires after one year.

Attachment B

EASTERN Center for Arts and Technology

**Consent Form for Use of Personal Email by EASTERN Employee with
Former Minor Student**

Permission of the parent or guardian must be obtained, in writing, in order for an EASTERN employee to communicate with a former minor student via the employee's personal email.

Student Name: _____

Name of Employee: _____

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____
(please print)

_____ I give my permission for the employee named above to communicate with my child via the employee's personal email.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Note: Form Expires after one year.

Employee/Student Electronic Communication Reporting Form

Reporting Employee: _____

Date of Report: _____

INCIDENT:

Who initiated the electronic communication? _____ Employee _____ Student

Date of Communication: _____ Time of Communication: _____

Method of Communication:

- _____ EASTERN-Provided E-Mail
- _____ EASTERN-Sponsored Website (including school and teacher web pages)
- _____ Telephone
- _____ Text Message
- _____ Other: Specify _____

Specify E-Mail Address, Phone Number, Website, or Other Electronic Method Used by Employee/Student for Electronic Communication:

Employee(s) Name(s) Involved in Electronic Communication if Other Than Reporting Employee:

Student(s) Name(s) Involved in Electronic Communication:

Content/Details of Electronic Communication (add attachment if necessary):

Signature of Reporting Employee: _____

IMPORTANT: Employees may not delete unauthorized text messages or other electronic communications from students until told to do so by the building principal.