

General Personnel

Social Networking/Electronic Communication

Consistent with Board Policy 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*, all District employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships, to demonstrate integrity and honesty, to be considerate and cooperative, and to maintain professional relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others. District employees are expected to exhibit the same level of appropriateness and professionalism in their use of online/internet-based electronic communication tools as that which is expected for classroom communication.

When District employees use online/internet-based electronic devices to communicate with students, such communications must occur only on social network accounts, blogs, discussion forums and websites which are approved and hosted by the District, and should be for school purposes and/or related to the student's participation in school activities.

District employees are prohibited from:

1. Communicating and socializing with current District 73½ students using online/internet-based social network accounts, blogs, online discussion forums or websites which are not district approved and hosted. This prohibition includes but is not limited to friending, tweeting, blogging and emailing with students on social network accounts such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. If a student contacts a District employee using a non-District approved and hosted online/internet-based social network account, blog, online discussion forum or website, the employee should notify the student and the student's parent/guardian (using the District's electronic mail system, unless another means of notification is more appropriate based on the student's age and needs) that District employees are prohibited from communicating with students on non-District approved and hosted online/internet based social network accounts, blogs, online discussion forums or websites, and the employee is therefore unable to respond to the student's communication. A District employee who has a child attending a District school is not prevented from such communications with their child.
2. Communicating and socializing with students using non-District based electronic mail, cell phones, texting, or internet-based online messaging except in the case of an emergency. District employees may communicate with students using the District's electronic mail system if such communication is for school purposes and/or related to the student's participation in school activities. If an employee needs to contact a student using non-District based electronic mail, cell phones, texting or internet-based online messaging for the student's participation in non-school related activities (i.e. park district sports team, church group, scouts) the employee must notify his or her principal and the student's Parent/Guardian and receive approval. A District employee who has a child attending a District school is not prevented from such communications with their child.
3. Publicizing, disclosing, distributing or posting any material or communications on Facebook, Twitter, and other online/internet-based social networks, blogs, online discussion forums or websites which cause or can be reasonably expected to cause a substantial disruption of the school environment, including but not limited to material or communications which:
 - a. are sexually explicit or sexually provocative;
 - b. exhibit or advocate the use of illicit drugs and/or illegal use of alcohol; or
 - c. are harassing, threatening or discriminatory, in violation of the District's anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies.

Violators of this policy may be subject to consequences including, but not limited to, loss of District electronic mail system and internet privileges, discipline up to and including termination, referral to law enforcement authorities and/or other legal action as deemed appropriate.

- LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/21-23 and 5/21-23a.
Ill. Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/5A-102.
Code of Ethics for Ill. Educators, 23 Ill.Admin.Code §22.20.
Garcetti v. Ceballos, 547 U.S. 410 (2006).
Pickering v. High School Dist. 205, 391 U.S. 563 (1968).
Mayer v. Monroe County Community School Corp., 474 F.3d 477 (7th Cir. 2007).
- CROSS REF: 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited); 5:100 (Staff Development Program), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Conduct; and Conflict of Interest); 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks); 7:180 (Preventing Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment)
- ADOPTED: January 17, 2017