

CHAPTER 6.00 - PERSONNEL

USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES

6.323

School Board employees, including Board Members, are required to use the School Board's electronic communications system and other authorized media for electronic communications in the performance of their duties, for official business and for school purposes.

I. Definitions

- A. District System. The "District System" refers to the District's electronic voice and data communications system, which consists of the District telephone system, e-mail system, enterprise applications and District, school, department and classroom websites. It also includes District-owned cell phones, radios and other communication devices that are issued to employees for official use. It includes only those social media platforms, websites and applications that have been authorized by the Superintendent under paragraph XII.
- B. Other Authorized Media. The term "Other Authorized Media" refers to personal cell phones, and other mobile electronic devices capable of electronic communications that are otherwise authorized by the District for official use. It also encompasses the limited use of personal telephones and Other Mobile Devices under paragraph VII, and text messaging permitted under paragraphs V(A) and VIII.
- C. Other Mobile Devices. The term "Other Mobile Devices" includes cell phones, smartphones and mobile tablets. Cell phones and smartphones are electronic communication devices that combine various features such as telephone, facsimile, internet and networking capabilities. iPhones and Samsung Galaxies are examples of smartphones. Mobile tablets (like iPads) offer internet access, texting and other mobile applications.
- D. Transitory Message. For purpose of paragraphs V(A) and VIII governing text messaging, a "Transitory Message" is one created primarily to communicate information of short-term value, with no material, on-going fiscal, administrative, legal, educational or historical significance that would reasonably require retention of such information if it were communicated in a written format. A transitory communication is not intended to transact official business, formalize or perpetuate knowledge, set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction or become a receipt.

- II. General Rules. The general rules requiring the use of authorized media for official electronic communications (paragraph III), prohibiting the use of

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unauthorized media for official communications (paragraph IV) and requiring the use of authorized media for official communications with students (paragraph V) are subject to limited exceptions dealing with the use of personal telephones and Other Mobile Devices (paragraph VII), text messaging (paragraphs V(A) and VIII) and emergencies (paragraph IX).

- III. Use of Authorized Media Required. Except as provided in paragraphs V(A) and VII - IX, employees shall use the District System and Other Authorized Media for electronic communications in the performance of their duties, for official business, and for school purposes.
- IV. Use of Unauthorized Media Prohibited. As stated in paragraph III, School Board employees are required to use the District System and Other Authorized Media for electronic communications in the course of their employment. Except as provided in paragraphs V(A), VII - IX, and XII, District employees shall not use personal e-mail, personal electronic messaging, text messaging, Facebook, Twitter, other social networking services or other unauthorized media for official communications. In the event a District employee receives an official communication through their personal email, personal electronic messaging, text messaging, Facebook, Twitter, or other social networking service, the employee shall forward the official communication to an authorized district system or preserve the communication by some other means. If the District employee is unsure of how to forward or preserve the official communication, they should seek assistance from the District's Information Technology Department. The purpose of this rule is to comply with Florida law governing the creation, retention and disposal of public records, and to promote uniformity and professionalism in the District's official communications.
- V. Electronic Communications with Students - Official Purposes. School Board employees are required to use the District System and Other Authorized Media for electronic communications with students in the performance of their employment duties and for school purposes. The District e-mail system, classroom websites, and other District provided systems adequately provide the means to electronically communicate with students. Conversely, it has determined that personal e-mail, text messaging, social networking and other personal electronic media are inappropriate and undesirable to use for official communication with students because such use may create the appearance of casual and unprofessional interaction with students, particularly when the interaction takes place outside the school setting, off-campus or after school hours. Furthermore, the use of personal electronic media may create an appearance of inappropriate association with students, and also may implicate District legal obligations in regard to the maintenance and retention of information and records. Accordingly, except for limited use of personal telephones and Other Mobile Devices as provided in paragraph VII, transitory text messages for extracurricular purposes as provided in paragraph V(A), emergency situations as provided in paragraph IX, and authorized social media as provided by paragraph XII, School Board employees

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shall not use personal e-mail, text messaging, electronic messaging, Facebook, Twitter, other social networking services, or other unauthorized media to communicate with students for school-related purposes.

A. Extracurricular Activities Exception. Coaches, club advisors and other employees may text, use personal e-mail or social media communication apps for Transitory Messages as defined in paragraph I(D) to and from students under their supervision in extracurricular activities, when there is a need to communicate with participating students about the activity, such as to notify them about a change in the time or place of practice.

VI. Electronic Communications with Students - Other Purposes. Paragraph V requires the use of the District System and Other Authorized Media to communicate with students for official purposes. However, paragraph V does not apply to employees' interactions with students outside the realm of their employment with the District and professional duties. If District employees choose to engage in social networking or other forms of electronic communications with students off-campus on their own time, they should be mindful of the requirements of the Code of Ethics and Principles of the Education Profession in Florida. District employees are strongly discouraged from any interaction with students that might create an appearance of inappropriate association or unprofessional conduct.

VII. Limited Use of Personal Telephones and Other Mobile Devices. Unless authorized for official use under paragraph I(B), it is generally not appropriate for District employees to use personal telephones and Other Mobile Devices for employment-related calls, and employees should use the District telephone system or Other Authorized Media for such calls. However, the occasional use of personal telephones for employment purposes is not prohibited when an employee is off campus or for some other reason does not have access to the District telephone system or Other Authorized Media. Furthermore, an employee may use a personal smartphone, computer or other mobile electronic device (such as an iPad, Nook or Kindle) to remotely access the District System, provided they comply with the District's Acceptable Use Policy and applicable security procedures.

VIII. Text Messaging - Official Communications with Non-Students. As stated in paragraph V, text messaging is not authorized for official communications with students, except in emergencies and under the extracurricular activity circumstances described in paragraph V(A). For other official electronic communications, employees should use District e-mail rather than text messaging. However, employees may utilize text messaging in the course of their employment for the limited purpose of sending or receiving Transitory Messages. Examples of transitory messages include, but are not limited to, reminders to employees about scheduled meetings or appointments; most telephone messages; announcements of office events such as holiday parties or group lunches; recipient copies of announcements of agency sponsored events such as exhibits, lectures, or workshops; and news releases received by the

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agency strictly for informational purposes and unrelated to agency programs or activities. Provided, however, that no employee shall text message while operating a motor vehicle.

- IX. Emergencies. This rule does not apply in emergency situations when communication by any means is necessary out of concern for the lives, safety or welfare of students, staff or members of the public.
- X. School and Department Websites. School and department webmasters may post and update employee only (internal) information using the District's webpages (accessed by employees via the internet or via the District network) only under the management and control of the District's Information Technology ("IT") Department. School and department webmasters may post and update public webpages (accessed by the public via the internet) only under the management and control of the District's IT Department.
- Schools and departments are prohibited from installing, configuring, posting or operating any internal or publicly accessed servers that are not authorized, managed and controlled by the IT Department.
- XI. Staff Websites. Teachers may seek to include a "class" or "teacher" web page as part of the involved school's public website. In this event, staff shall coordinate with the school webmaster to arrange for inclusion of the class or teacher web page as a part of the school's website.
- XII. Guidelines and Procedures. The Superintendent is authorized to adopt guidelines and procedures to implement and administer this policy. In particular, the Superintendent may adopt guidelines and procedures that authorize the use of other social media platforms, websites and applications as part of the District System for school or District purposes, subject to any restrictions and conditions that the Superintendent may impose on the use of such an authorized social medium.

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1001.41, F.S.

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