

STAFF MEMBERS AND ELECTRONIC OR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Superintendent and the School Principals will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the online, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to the following prohibited behaviors:

1. Improper fraternization with students using electronic or digital communication.
 - a. Teachers may not list current students as “friends” on networking sites.
 - b. All e-contacts with students should be through the district’s school-approved platform.
 - c. Improper private contact via electronic or digital communication e-mail or phone is prohibited.
2. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content.
3. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol.
4. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology.

As per state law, employees are discouraged from sharing content or comments containing the following when directed at a citizen of the State of Oklahoma:

- 1) Obscene sexual content or links to obscene sexual content;
- 2) Abusive behavior and bullying language or tone;
- 3) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity; and
- 4) Disclosure of any information required to be maintained as confidential by law, regulation, or internal policy.

“Electronic or digital communication” includes, but is not limited to, emails, text messages, instant messages, direct messages, social media messages, messages sent through software applications, and any other electronic or digital means of communication.

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials online. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the School

Principals and Superintendent will download the offensive material and promptly bring that misconduct to the attention of the school district’s legal counsel for review.

The board of education shall designate school-approved platforms. The administration shall publish school-approved platforms on the district’s website and in student or staff handbooks.

School personnel engaging in electronic or digital communication with an individual student shall include the student’s parent or guardian in any electronic or digital communication, unless such communication is on a school approved platform and related to school and academic communications. The only exception to this requirement may be made in case of an emergency as determined by the board of education, subject to subsequent notification to the parent or guardian. School employees shall make reasonable efforts to use school-approved platforms, systems, or applications that allow automatic inclusion of parents or guardians in communications with students.

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School employees who are the subject of a corroborated report of having engaged in electronic or digital communications that would violate this policy and state law shall be placed on administrative leave while the school district investigates the incident. If the investigation finds that no misconduct occurred, the incident shall not be noted in the personnel file. If the employee was placed on administrative leave during the investigation of the incident but the investigation finds that no misconduct occurred, the employee shall be reinstated, and the personnel file shall include a note of the finding of no misconduct.

Employees who engage in any of the above-referenced prohibited behaviors are subject to the possibility of penalties, including termination of employment. Incidents will be reported in compliance with district policy FFG and state law.

REFERENCE: 74 O.S. § 840-8.1
 70 O.S. § 6-401.

***A copy of this policy shall be distributed to each affected employee by email.**