



STAFF CONDUCT ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Social
Media 4021**

Policy Statement

Purpose & Scope

Statement of Purpose

The dual purposes of this Policy are: (a) to prevent harm and potential harm to Students and Staff Members caused by unmonitored Electronic Communications; and (b) to set forth the parameters of Social Media use by employees of the District in a way that does not impede or interfere with the educational mission of the District.

The purpose of this Policy is not to discourage Staff Members' use of Social Media but to encourage use that does not interfere with District operations, impede the ability of the Staff Member to perform their duties, or compromise the safety or well-being of Students.

Scope

Covered Persons

This Policy applies to the use of certain technology by District employees ("Staff Members"). This Policy applies without regard to whether such use occurs during working or nonworking time and without regard to whether District equipment or property is used.

This Policy does not address Student use of the Internet. For that purpose, the District has adopted an Internet Safety Curriculum, which covers: (a) cyber-bullying; (b) appropriate online behavior; and (c) social media, social networking, and chat rooms.

Covered Technology

This Policy applies to Staff Members' use of Electronic Communications and Social Media ("Covered Technology"). Specifically excepted from the definition of "Covered Technology" is any technology that has been officially authorized or approved by the District ("Approved Technology").

For the purposes of this Policy, "Electronic Communications" shall mean any communication that is sent, delivered, or received via: (a) email; (b) instant message; (c) text message; (d) telephone, including cellular or mobile phone and

smartphones; (e) Social Media; (f) the Internet; or (g) other similar technology.

Specifically excepted from the definition of “Covered Technology” is any technology that has been officially authorized or approved by the District (“Approved Technology”). For the purposes of this Policy, “Social Media” shall mean any website, application, tool, or platform that enables communication between users or the publication of content by an individual. For purposes of illustration only, current examples of Social Media include: (a) social-networking sites (e.g., Facebook); (b) blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter, Tumbler); (c) and content-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Instagram).

Applicability of Other Policies

This Policy is intended to supplement, not replace, other District policies. Although online conduct involves the use of a relatively new medium, it remains subject to all applicable District policies. For example, District policies governing Sexual Misconduct, Cell Phone Use During Working Hours, Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment, Harassment or Misconduct Toward Students, Dating and Social Engagement With Students, Telecommunications Access, Staff Ethics, Confidentiality, and Anti-Discrimination, apply to Online Conduct with the same force and effect as they apply to conduct in any other context.

Prohibited Conduct

As stated above, Staff Members’ Online Conduct is subject to the same standards of conduct applicable to conduct engaged in off-line. The following list is not intended to be comprehensive or exclusive but, instead, to identify some examples of prohibited Online Conduct that is considered by the District to have the most serious consequences. Staff Members who engage in any of the prohibited conduct listed below will be subject to corrective action in accordance with District policy.

Prohibited Social-Media Conduct and Use

A Staff Member may not:
engage in any Online Conduct that undermines or interferes with the Staff Member’s ability to effectively perform his or her official duties;
disclose any confidential information (as defined in Policy 4003) via Social Media;
disparage any Student;
make or accept a request from a Student to connect via Social Media (other than Approved Technology), including but not limited to a Facebook “friend request.”

For the purposes of this Policy, a “Student” shall mean any person who currently is enrolled in any school in the District but shall not include: (a) a former student who is no longer enrolled in the District; (b) a student who is an immediate family member or near relative as defined in 14 *Del. C.* § 1318(b) and (d), respectively.

Prohibited Electronic Communications

A Staff Member may not use any Covered Technology, other than Approved Technology to communicate with a Student.

Duty to Report

Just as all Staff Members have a duty to report a violation of the District’s Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment policies, so, too, must Staff Members report any known or reasonably suspected violation of this Policy. Thus, any Staff Member who observes or who becomes aware of a potential violation of this Policy by another Staff Member has the duty to report such information to the District and to cooperate fully in any resulting investigation. The policy and procedures set forth in the District’s Anti-Harassment policy apply to the duty to report for the purposes of this Policy, as well. Failure to report a known or reasonably suspected violation of this Policy may result in corrective action.

In the event that the District determines that a violation of this policy has occurred, it shall notify the Student’s parents or guardian as soon as possible of its determination. A reasonable attempt to notify shall be made no longer than three (3) working days from the date of the determination.

Notice of Intent to Monitor

Staff Members are hereby notified that any content posted online may be discovered or reported to the District. For example, information may be discovered by the District as a result of the District’s efforts to monitor its online reputation, as a result of an investigation or complaint, or through other legitimate business activities.

Staff Members are also notified that information received or discovered by the District will be handled in accordance with the District’s policies and procedures. Staff Members are reminded that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy with respect to information published online, even where a Staff Member’s account is set to “private” or otherwise subject to limited access.

Questions About this Policy

Because of the rapidly changing and constantly evolving nature of the Covered Technology, it is likely that issues will

	<p>arise that are not specifically addressed by this Policy. Any Staff Member who is uncertain about the application of this Policy to a particular scenario or in a particular set of circumstances should seek the guidance of the Director of HR or Deputy Superintendent <i>before</i> engaging in the questionable Online Conduct.</p>	
Responsibility	The Board leadership and Superintendent shall be responsible for compliance.	
References	<p>Related policies: 1001 Mission, 1003 District Goals and Objectives, 4003 Staff Conduct and Ethics, 8000 Students (entire policy series)</p> <p>Related documents: (None)</p>	
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Revision/ Review Date	Revision: 10/18/2023	