

Policy

STAFF USE OF INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKS AND OTHER FORMS ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Social Networking Websites

The Superintendent and the School Principals shall annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, 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:

- A. Improper fraternization with students using social networking websites on the internet
 - 1. Teachers may not list current students as “friends” on networking sites.
 - 2. All e-contacts with students should be through the district’s computer and telephone system.
 - 3. All contact by coaches with team members shall be sent to all team members.
 - 4. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
 - 5. Inappropriate contact via e-mail or phone is prohibited.
- B. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
- C. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
- D. Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid
- E. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
- F. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. 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 Board’s Personnel Committee for review.

Cell Phones

School staff shall not contact parents’/guardians’ or students’ cell phones unless directed to do so by the parent/guardian or student. School district personnel shall limit cell phone interaction with students to contact that pertains to legitimate school business. Legitimate school business includes:

- A. Answering academic inquiries regarding homework, other classroom work or assignments;
- B. Scheduling appointments for school related conferences and/or extra help;
- C. Clarifying classroom expectations and/or assignments;
- D. Notifications related to classroom, club or sports schedules, events, trips, assignments; deadlines.

Cell phone contact with students shall be as brief and direct as possible. When brief contact is not sufficient and/or feasible to resolve the matter, teachers shall schedule face to face conferences during regular classroom and extra-help periods to confer with the student. No contact shall exceed three replies.

Personal use of cell phones should be limited to emergency situations or “free time” such as breaks.

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Text Messages

No staff member, coach or volunteer shall text message any student individually. All text messages to students shall be sent to the class, team, club or organization.

Staff shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as profane or obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illicit, illegal or unethical activity; or messages:

- A. That violate the district's affirmative action policy;
- B. That are personal in nature and not related to the business of the district;
- C. That can be interpreted as provocative, flirtatious or sexual in nature;
- D. That contain confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information

Computer Communication

School district personnel shall adhere to the following guidelines when sending or receiving messages via internal or external E-mail:

- A. All messages shall pertain to legitimate school business
- B. Personnel shall not reveal passwords to others. If a staff member believes that a password has been lost or stolen, or that E-mail has been accessed by someone without authorization, he/she should contact the Help Desk immediately. E-mail windows should not be left open on the screen when the computer is unattended.
- C. Messages and E-mail files shall be deleted in a timely manner. The network system operator will delete messages that are retained after 90 days unless other arrangements are approved by the assistant superintendent for personnel and technology.
- D. To ensure that federal copyright laws are not violated, staff shall not send messages that contain text without the author's permission.
- E. Staff shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illegal or unethical activity; or messages:
 1. That violate the district's affirmative action policy;
 2. That are personal in nature and not related to the business of the district;
 3. That are broadcast to a large group of other personnel without supervisory permission;
 4. That contain confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information.
- F. Personnel shall become familiar with the district's policies and regulation on staff and student access to networked information resources before initiating E-mail use.
- G. Employees learning of any misuse of the E-mail systems shall notify the assistant superintendent for personnel and technology immediately.
- H. The Superintendent, in conjunction with the Board President, reserves the right to review all district used e-mail. The Board President, in conjunction with the Solicitor, reserves the right to review, with cause, the Superintendent's e-mail.
- I. School staff will refrain from web browsing on personal or district devices during the work day except in emergency situations, "free time" such as such or breaks, or if it is part of a curriculum.

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J. Privately Owned Technology Device Usage in School

1. The Board of Education recognizes technology is always changing and as a result of increased accessibility to technology many pupils and/or employees possess technology hardware and software devices for their use during non-school hours. These privately-owned devices may be beneficial to pupils and/or staff members during school hours for approved education purposes. Therefore, the Board of Education will allow pupils, staff members, and/or the public/guests to use their privately-owned technology hardware and software devices under conditions outlined in the Policy.
2. For the purposes of this Policy, “privately-owned” means technology hardware and software that is purchased owned and maintained by the pupils and/or staff members at no expense to the school or school district.
3. For the purposes of this Policy, “hardware” means any device that can store, access, retrieve, and/or communicate data or information. “Hardware” may include, but is not limited to, any type of computer device; any internet enabled device; wireless telephone; electronic reader; video broadcasting and/or recording device; or camera.
4. For the purpose of this Policy, “software” means any computer program(s), apps, related data that provide instruction for telling a computer or other hardware device what to do and how to do it.
5. For the purpose of this Policy, “school grounds” means on school property (buildings, grounds, buses, etc.) during the instructional day and during school supervised events after school hours on school property.
6. The use of privately-owned technology by pupils and/or staff members during the school day must be approved by the school teaching staff member and/or immediate supervisor/principal through a signed consent/permission form. The teaching staff and/or immediate supervisor/principal may also prohibit the use of privately-owned technology for an assignment(s).
7. The use of privately-owned technology by a pupil in the educational program during the school day must be approved by the students’ parent(s) or guardian(s) through a signed consent/permission form. The parent(s) or guardian(s) (may also prohibit the use of privately-owned technology for an assignment(s).
8. Pupils, staff members, and/or the public/guests who use privately-owned technology on school grounds will be given access to the school district’s computer server(s) or network(s) and regulations and must comply with school district policies and regulations regarding acceptable use of computers and technology. Any use of privately-owned technology by pupils and/or staff members shall be in strict accordance with the Board policies and regulations. Any violation will subject pupils and/or staff members to appropriate discipline and consequences as outlined in the district’s Acceptable Use Policy. Medford Lakes School District reserves the right to examine any privately owned device and search its contents if there is a reason to believe that school policies, rules, or regulations have been violated.
9. The teaching staff member, in considering use of privately-owned technology will ensure such approval does not provide any advantage or benefit to the pupil who owns such technology over the pupil who does not own such technology. The teaching staff member will not approve the use of privately-owned technology if the teaching staff member determines

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its use would be advantageous or beneficial to the pupil who owns such technology over the pupil who does not own such technology.

10. The school district assumes no responsibility for any privately-owned technology brought to school by a pupil, staff member, or guest. The pupils, staff members, and/or the public/guests shall be responsible for the proper operation and use of any privately-owned technology brought to school. The district IT Department and other technology staff members shall not be responsible for the effective use and/or technical support for any privately-owned technology.
11. The school district shall assume no responsibility for the security of, or damage to, any privately-owned technology device brought to school by pupils, staff members, and/or the public/guests. Pupils and/or staff members are encouraged to purchase private insurance for loss, damage, or theft of any privately-owned technology device brought to school.

Implementation

This policy shall be distributed annually to all staff members.

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Adopted: November 18, 2009

Review/Update: March 14, 2012; November 14, 2012

Readopted: May 9, 2012; November 14, 2012

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Key Words

Employee Conduct, Cell Phones, Text Messaging, E-Mail

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:6-10 Dismissal and reduction in compensation of persons under tenure in public school system
N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
N.J.S.A. 18A:27-4 Power of boards of education to make rules governing employment of teacher, etc., employment thereunder
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)

Hicks v. Pemberton Bd. of Ed., 1975 S.L.D. 332

Quiroli v. Linwood Bd. of Ed., 1974 S.L.D. 1035

Carlstadt Teachers Ass'n v. Carlstadt Bd. of Ed., App. Div., unreported decision (docket no. A-1469-80-T4, decided March 26, 1982), 1982 S.L.D. 1448

Possible

Cross References: 4117.50 Standards for staff discipline
4119.2 Responsibilities

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- *4119.21 Conflict of interest
- *4119.22 Conduct and Dress
- *4119.23 Employee substance abuse
- 4119.24 Staff/pupil relations
- *4138 Nonschool employment
- *4138.2 Private tutoring
- *6144 Controversial issues

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.