



EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA USE POLICY

As role models for Promesa Public Schools' students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when off-duty. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for Web links on the employee's page and for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes must observe the following:

1. The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using Promesa Public Schools' computers, network, or equipment.
2. The employee will continue to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
 - Confidentiality of student records.
 - Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
 - Confidentiality of District records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses.
 - Copyright law.
 - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

1. Electronic media includes all forms of social media, including but not limited to text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.
2. Communicate means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication. However, the employee may be subject to Promesa Public Schools regulations on personal electronic communications. [See PERSONAL USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA, above] Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.



An employee who does not have a valid educational purpose, a family relationship, or other appropriate relationship with a student subject to approval of the parent or guardian will not use electronic media to communicate with a student. Examples of acceptable non-educational reasons to communicate with a student via electronic media include: serving as a mentor to a student, having a relationship with a student who is a niece or nephew, the child of an adult friend, a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization.

The following provisions apply to employees who have a valid educational purpose to communicate with students via electronic media:

1. An employee who has a valid educational purpose for communicating with a student via electronic media will limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
2. All communications with students via electronic media must be appropriate in content and must provide a clear benefit to the student.
3. Electronic media may not be used by an employee to develop a social relationship with a student beyond the relationship that already exists outside the use of electronic media.
4. The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.
5. The employee will not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time. A teacher at the secondary level may respond to a student's request for a response directly related to a valid educational purpose in the subject for which that teacher is responsible for providing instruction.

The following provisions apply to employees who have a valid educational purpose to communicate with students via electronic media. The following provisions also apply to employees who use electronic media to communicate with students who are family members or who have another appropriate relationship with a student subject to approval of the parent or guardian:

1. The employee is prohibited from soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student and is prohibited from making any sexual or romantic references when communicating with a student
2. The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
3. The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local



policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:

- Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records.
 - Copyright law.
4. Upon request from the administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
 5. Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee will discontinue communicating with the student through any form of one-to-one electronic communication.
 6. In all cases, an employee must exercise discretion and sound judgment when communicating with a student via electronic media.

The provisions in this regulation are extensions of the professional standards of conduct. Nothing in this regulation should be construed to support unprofessional conduct at any level.