

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT  
PERSONAL USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

DH  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

ELECTRONIC MEDIA DEFINITION	Electronic media includes all forms of social media, including but not limited to text messaging, instant messaging (Remind), electronic mail (email), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing web sites (e.g., YouTube), video conferencing software (Microsoft Teams), learning management system (Canvas), editorial comments posted on the internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.
EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY	As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. 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, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.
PERSONAL USE	An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copy righted material of the district without express, written consent.</li><li>• 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, 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Confidentiality of student record. [See Policy FL]</li><li>○ Confidentiality of student health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.</li><li>○ Copyright law [See Policy CY]</li><li>○ Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.</li></ul></li></ul>

See Use of Electronic Media with Students, below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

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USE OF  
ELECTRONIC  
MEDIA WITH  
STUDENTS

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the district through electronic media.

DEFINITION

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

- Electronic media includes all forms of social media, including but not limited to text messaging, instant messaging (Remind), electronic mail (email), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing web sites (e.g., YouTube), video conferencing software (Microsoft Teams), learning management system (Canvas), editorial comments posted on the internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.
- Communicate means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted as students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or blog) is not a communication: however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See Personal Use of Electronic Media, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.
- A certified or licensed employee means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

COMMUNICATING  
WITH STUDENTS

An employee who uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

- Only a teacher, coach, sponsor, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility.

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- The employee shall limit communication to students who are employed with EMS ISD to matters within the scope of the student's professional responsibilities as an employee (e.g., maintenance and custodial).
- The employee shall 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.)
- 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.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. With the exception of extracurricular activities that extend into these hours. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- 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 Public Information Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
  - Copyright law [See Policy CY]
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DF]
- Upon request from 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.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through email, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

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EXCEPTIONS

An employee may request an exception from one or more limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.