

# Policy

## Egg Harbor Township Board of Education

### **4000 Support Staff Members**

### **4283 Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students**

Electronic communications for the purpose of this policy means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, e-mails, text messages, instant messages, and communications made by means of an internet website, district network or website, and social media and social networking websites and Apps. This policy applies to electronic communications between district employees and students enrolled in the district. The chief school administrator/principals will 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 a professional manner and not engage in inappropriate or unprofessional conduct which distracts from or disrupts the educational process. An annual orientation and reminder will give special emphasis to improper fraternization with students using electronic communications.

- A. All electronic communications with students should be through the district e-mail system, district computer network or website, district approved educational website used as part of the instructional tools of the classroom, or district telephone systems, when possible;
- B. All electronic communications by coaches and extracurricular advisors with team members and members of extracurricular activities should be sent to all team members and activity participants, when possible;
- C. All electronic communications should include the students' parents/guardians, when possible;
- D. School employees shall not list students enrolled in the district as "friends" or "followers" on personal social networking sites, unless the employee and the student are relatives, as defined in Bylaw 0142.2;
- E. Electronic communications that are inappropriate and therefore prohibited include, but are not limited to the following :
  - 1. Communications that may be interpreted as provocative, flirtatious, or sexual in nature;
  - 2. Communications exhibiting or advocating use of drugs, alcohol, or other illegal activities;

3. Communications that may be perceived as profane, obscene, racist, sexist or promoting illicit, illegal or unethical activity;
  4. Communications that contain students' confidential information;
  5. Communications that may significantly affect the employee's ability to perform his/her job or disrupts the educational environment;
  6. Communications that include any content that would violate district policy or regulation.
- F. Staff shall have no expectation of privacy when using district technology, the district network and/or public social media sites;
- G. The administration shall monitor for inappropriate staff electronic communications on district computers, other school issued technology, and the district computer network;
- H. Staff shall be informed of the consequences that may result from inappropriate electronic communications up to and including dismissal from employment;
- I. Reporting Responsibilities: In the event a student sends an improper electronic communication as defined in this policy, to a staff member, the staff member shall report the improper communication to the principal or designee by the next school day. The principal or designee shall take appropriate action to have the student discontinue such improper electronic communications. Improper electronic communications by a staff member or a student may result in appropriate disciplinary action;
- J. The chief school administrator or designees may periodically conduct internet searches to see if staff members have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers or internet websites is discovered, the school principals and chief school administrator will seek to preserve the problematic or offensive material and will seek to maintain storage and chain of custody of the evidence. The chief school administrator/principal shall promptly bring that alleged misconduct to the attention of the board president;
- K. The chief school administrator shall develop regulations to implement this policy.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-40

Approved: 12/9/2014

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